



Acosta exits; Trump's big Cabinet turnover keeps growing

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
and DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press

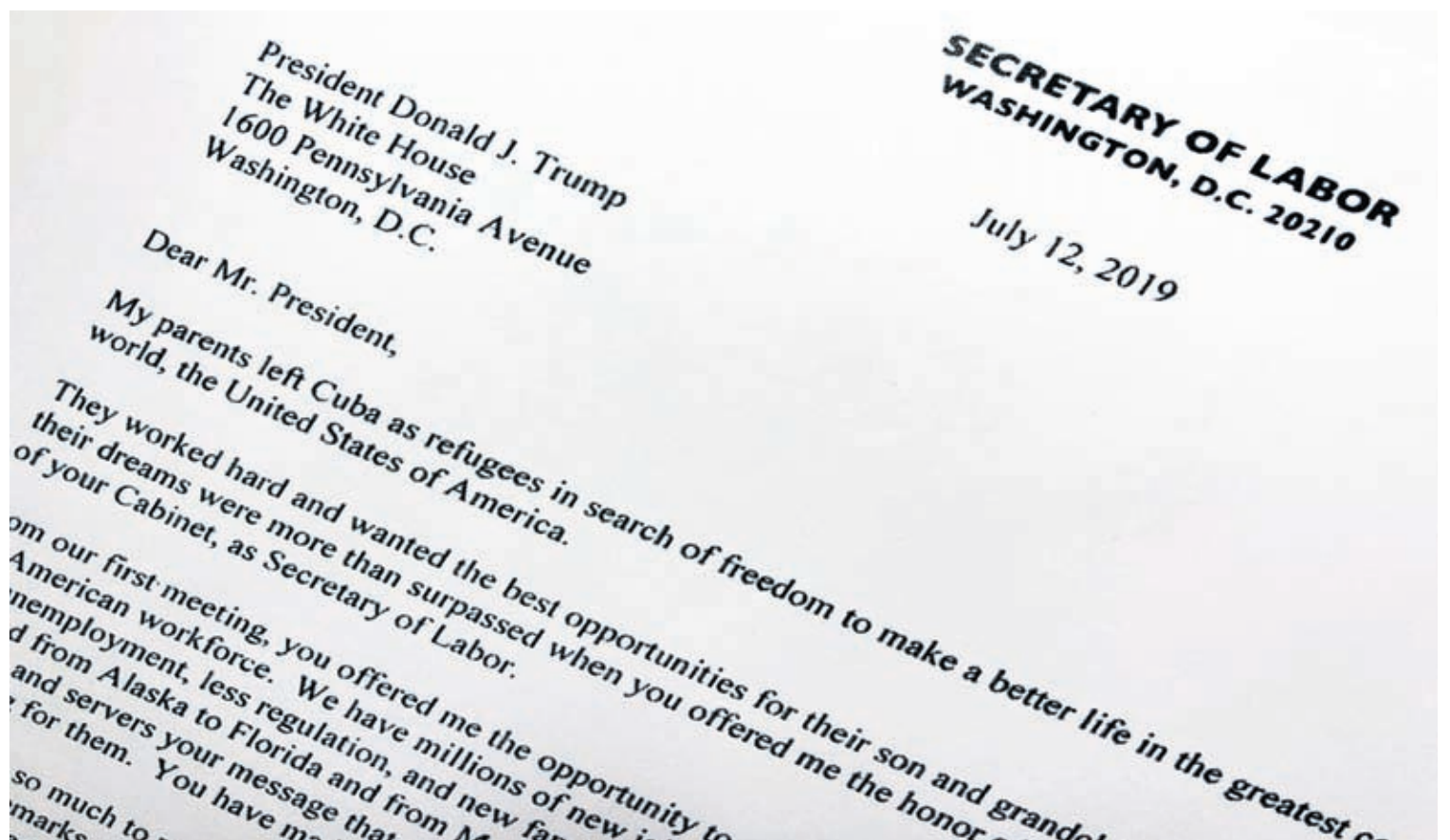
WASHINGTON (AP) — Adding to the lengthy list of departures from President Donald Trump's Cabinet, Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta said Friday he's stepping down amid the tumult over his handling of a 2008 secret plea deal with wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein, who is accused of sexually abusing underage girls.

Trump, with Acosta at his side, said Friday he did not ask his secretary to leave and "I hate to see this happen." The president, who publicly faults the news media almost daily, said Acosta put the blame there, too.

Acosta "informed me this morning that he felt the constant drumbeat of press about a prosecution which took place under his watch more than 12 years ago was bad for the Administration, which he so strongly believes in, and he graciously tendered his resignation," Trump tweeted later in the day.

Trump said Patrick Pizzella, deputy secretary since April 2018, would succeed Acosta on an acting basis.

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Part of the resignation letter from Labor Secretary Alex Acosta to President Donald Trump is photographed in Washington, Friday, July 12, 2019. Associated Press

As Barry approaches, New Orleans residents debate evacuation

In this Aug. 13, 2016 aerial photo over Amite, La., flooded homes are seen from heavy rains inundating the region. Memories of an epic flood that caused billions of dollars in damage had Louisiana's capital on edge Friday, July 12, 2019, as Barry gained strength in the Gulf of Mexico.

Associated Press
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Acosta exits; Trump's big Cabinet turnover keeps growing

Continued from Front

Pizzella served in the administrations of Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Barack Obama. A coalition of civil rights, human rights, labor and other groups opposed his nomination by Trump to the department's No. 2 slot, citing Pizzella's record on labor rights.

Acosta was the U.S. attorney in Miami when he oversaw a 2008 non-prosecution agreement that allowed Epstein to avoid federal trial but plead guilty to state charges and serve 13 months in jail. Similar charges filed against Epstein by federal prosecutors in New York this week had put Acosta's handling of the 2008 agreement with the now-jailed financier back in the spotlight.

Years ago, Epstein had counted Trump and former President Bill Clinton among his friends, but Trump said this week he was "not a fan."

Acosta said he didn't want his involvement in Epstein's case to overshadow the president's agenda and

said his resignation would be effective next week.

"My point here today is we have an amazing economy, and the focus needs to be on the economy," he said.

Top Democratic lawmakers and presidential candidates had demanded that Acosta resign. But Acosta had defended his actions, insisting at a news conference Wednesday that he got the toughest deal on Epstein that he could at the time.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said he should never have been appointed by Trump and confirmed by the Senate. "Thank God he's gone," she said.

Acosta had also frustrated some conservatives who wanted him gone long before the Epstein uproar. Among their objections were his decisions to proceed with several employment discrimination lawsuits and to allow certain Obama administration holdovers to keep their jobs.

His resignation extends record turnover at the high-



President Donald Trump speaks to members of the media with Secretary of Labor Alex Acosta on the South Lawn of the White House, Friday, July 12, 2019, before Trump boards Marine One for a short trip to Andrews Air Force Base, Md. and then on to Wisconsin.

Associated Press

est levels of Trump's administration, with acting secretaries at key departments, including the Pentagon and Homeland Security. Roughly two-thirds of the Cabinet has turned over by the two-and-a-half year mark of Trump's term.

Only the departments of Treasury, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Energy, Commerce and Agriculture continue with the leaders that were first confirmed.

The high rate of turnover also extends to the White House, where 76% of those given the title of "assistant to the president" in Trump's first year had left by the beginning of July 2019, according to Martha Joynt Kumar, director of

the White House Transition Project. The percentages were substantially lower under Obama (61, Bush (50%) and Clinton (42%), according to Kumar's research.

Epstein, 66, reached the plea deal in Florida in 2008 to secretly end a federal sex abuse investigation involving at least 40 teenage girls that could have landed him behind bars for life. He instead pleaded guilty to Florida state charges, spent 13 months in jail, paid settlements to victims and registered as a sex offender.

A federal judge has said Acosta violated federal law by keeping Epstein's victims in the dark about the plea arrangement, and the Justice Department has been investigating. The

deal came under scrutiny earlier this year after reporting by The Miami Herald.

Trump had defended Acosta earlier this week while saying he'd look "very closely" at his handling of the 2008 agreement.

Acosta had attempted to clear his name and held a news conference — encouraged by Trump — to defend his actions. In a 50-plus-minute lawyerly rebuttal, he argued his office had secured the best deal it could and had worked in the best interests of Epstein's victims.

"We did what we did because we wanted to see Epstein go to jail," he said. Pressed on whether he had any regrets, Acosta repeatedly said circumstances had changed since then. □



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New Hampshire legalizes sports betting

By **HOLLY RAMER**

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire became the latest state to legalize sports gambling on Friday, and Gov. Chris Sununu said he's eager to place the first bet.

The Republican signed into law a measure that legalizes betting on professional sports and most Division I college sports, excluding games involving New Hampshire schools.

Mobile betting as well as

retail gambling at 10 locations will be allowed, though it will take some time to set up. The wagering is expected to produce an estimated \$7.5 million for education in fiscal year 2021 and \$13.5 million two years later. The state Lottery Commission will regulate the new industry.

"We can do it with a lot of confidence because it's being done responsibly, and it's being done with an organization here at the lottery that just knows

what they're doing," Sununu said. "They know how to get this stuff off the ground."

Since a U.S. Supreme Court last year ended Nevada's monopoly on legal sportsbooks, they've opened in eight more states. In addition to New Hampshire, another six states plus the District of Columbia have legalized the practice but have not yet opened sportsbooks yet. The issue is going to voters in Colorado this November. □



This March 27, 2008, file photo, shows the Pentagon in Washington. The Democratic-controlled House is moving to put a liberalized stamp on Pentagon policy with a \$725 billion defense policy measure that pares back the Trump administration's defense request and authority to make war against Iran.

Associated Press

House Democrats lead push to restrict Trump on Iran strikes

By ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Democratic-controlled House voted Friday to put a liberalized stamp on Pentagon policy, including a bipartisan proposal to limit President Donald Trump's authority to make war against Iran.

The measure passed along party lines after a series of votes that pushed it further to the left. Among them was a 251-170 tally to require Trump get authorization from Congress to conduct military strikes against Iran, along with a repeal of a 2002 law authorizing the war in Iraq.

More than two dozen Republicans joined with Democrats on the Iran vote. Trump last month came within minutes of launching a missile strike against Iran in retaliation for Iran's downing of a U.S. drone. The broader measure passed by a 220-197 vote after several other provisions were tacked on by the Democratic Party's progressive wing, which had been upset by leadership's handling of a border bill last month.

"On the floor, the bill has taken a radical left turn," said Texas Rep. Mac Thornberry, the top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee. "There's good and bad in this bill ... but it's moving in a direction that does make America less safe."

The Trump administration

has promised to veto the House measure.

The Senate passed its own bill last month.

Lawmakers will try to reconcile the competing versions in what could be lengthy negotiations given the differences.

The House measure, which cuts Trump's request for the military by \$17 billion, is still too rich for some progressives. They also balk at its continued funding of overseas military operations. But the measure includes Democratic priorities such as a ban on transferring new detainees to the Guantanamo Bay prison and a denial of Trump's request for \$88 million to build a new prison at the base. It removes a ban against transferring detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the United States that was enacted when Democrats controlled Congress in the early years of the Obama administration.

It would ban the deployment of a new submarine-launched low-yield nuclear missile and block the administration from shifting military money to a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

"It's a bill that I think Democrats should be happy with," said the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash. "It's not everything they want but we need to pass it to say, 'This is our position,' to move the ball in the direction we want." □



In this Thursday, June 13, 2019 photo, ExpressVote XL voting machines are displayed during a demonstration at the Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

Who's behind voting-machine makers? Money of unclear origins

By EMERY P. DALESIO
AP Business Writer

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The voting-machine makers that aim to sell their systems in North Carolina are largely owned by private equity firms that don't disclose their investors.

The companies didn't want the public to know even that much.

North Carolina's statewide elections board demanded the machine-makers' ownership information last month after special counsel Robert Mueller's April report into Russian efforts to sway the 2016 presidential election. Their concerns about potential foreign interference have grown since Maryland officials learned last year that a company maintaining that state's election infrastructure did not disclose its financing by a venture fund whose largest investor is a Russian oligarch.

The private-equity backers of the three voting systems vendors seeking approval to sell to county elections boards in North Carolina told The Associated Press they're controlled by U.S. citizens. They claimed they have no ties to foreign oligarchs or other nefarious persons facing financial sanctions by Washington. But they didn't provide information about the sources of the money they invest.

And they asked the board not to share what they did disclose with the public.

The elections board released the companies' responses — as required by law — under a public records request from The AP. Election security watchdogs remain frustrated.

"The answer that we all really want is, is there foreign influence over the companies that make equipment that's used in our elections? We didn't get that answer, because the actual influence is obfuscated behind the private equity firms," said Maurice Turner, who focuses on election security at the Center for Democracy & Technology in Washington, D.C.

The three companies — Omaha, Nebraska-based Election Systems & Software; Boston-based Clear Ballot; and Austin, Texas-based Hart InterCivic — were told to disclose anyone holding a 5 percent or greater stake, or in a parent company or any subsidiaries.

All three private companies responded by listing their executives and equity funds as chief owners. And all three asked that even these responses be kept confidential.

Hart InterCivic said that it "derives independent actual value from this information not being generally

known or readily ascertainable and makes reasonable efforts to maintain the secrecy of this information."

Election Systems & Software did disclose that it is controlled through an intermediary company by McCarthy Group, a private equity firm also based in Omaha. The CEO and chief financial officer of ES&S own smaller stakes.

Hart InterCivic said nearly 80 percent of its ownership is held through an intermediary company by H.I.G. Capital, a Miami, Florida-based private equity firm. Gregg L. Burt, Hart's board chairman and former CEO and the founder of his own Austin-based private equity firm, owns another 10.5%, the company disclosed.

Clear Ballot founders Larry Moore and Tim Halvorsen, later investor Steven Papa and Raging Capital Opportunity Fund V LLC all own more than 5 percent stakes, the election systems maker said, without detailing each owner's share. The company said that neither the fund nor any individual invested in the fund controlled by Rocky Hill, New Jersey-based Raging Capital Management owns a controlling interest in Clear Ballot Group.

The board hasn't scheduled a hearing to review the responses. □

Dems, Republicans air warring views on migrants' conditions



Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., center, wipes her eyes while testifying before the House Oversight Committee hearing on family separation and detention centers, Friday, July 12, 2019 on Capitol Hill in Washington. Also sitting at the panel with Tlaib are Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., left, and Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., right.

By ALAN FRAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four House Democratic freshmen who recently toured detention stations for migrants along the Texas border told a House committee Friday of jam-packed, fetid holding areas "in front of the American flag" and accused President Donald Trump of intentional cruelty to discourage future arrivals.

Firing back, a quartet of Republicans from border states told the same panel that Democrats weren't doing anything to ease the crisis and blamed them for posturing that one said was aimed at "Twitter followers and cynical politics."

Meanwhile, Vice President Mike Pence was touring detention facilities in Texas. After seeing one site where almost 400 men were being held outside in cages in the sweltering heat, Pence acknowledged, "This is tough stuff."

Friday's House Oversight and Reform Committee hearing offered a microcosm of the nation's red-blue chasm and, perhaps, a chance for each side to vent. But ultimately, it underscored each party's starkly warring views about Trump's hardline anti-immigration policies, suggest-

ing they're destined to be a leading issue for the 2020 presidential and congressional campaigns.

The hearing came as the number of families, children and other migrants entering the U.S. from Mexico has surged above 100,000 monthly since March, overwhelming federal agencies' ability to detain them in sanitary conditions or move them quickly to better housing. It also came days before Trump-ordered nationwide raids targeting people in the U.S. illegally are expected to begin, according to administration officials and immigrant activists, actions that would further inflame the issue.

Before Friday's session began, panel Chairman Elijah Cummings, D-Md., released a report providing new details on 2,648 of the children the Trump administration separated from their families last year before abandoning that policy under widespread pressure. Unknown numbers of others were also separated.

The report, using data the panel demanded from federal agencies, found that 18 children under age 2 — half who were just months old — were kept from their parents up to half a year. Hundreds were held longer than previously

revealed, including 25 kept over a year, and at least 30 remain apart from their parents. The figures reflect "a deliberate, unnecessary and cruel choice by President Trump and his administration," the report said. Congress approved \$4.6 billion last month to help improve conditions. But that measure angered liberals who felt it lacked requirements forcing better treatment of migrants, prompting internal frictions that have yet to fully play out.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., the 29-year-old progressive icon, was among the four Democrats — all women — who testified. After being sworn in at her request, a practice the committee generally eschews for fellow lawmakers and seemed a taunt at dubious Republicans, she described migrant women telling her they had to sleep on the concrete floor and drink from the toilet because their cell's sink was broken.

"I believe these women," she said. "What was worst about this was the fact that there were American flags hanging all over these facilities, that children were being separated from their parents in front of the American flag," she said.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., was near tears as she displayed a picture she said was of a 7-year-old Guatemalan girl — the same age as her son — who died in U.S. custody. She criticized harsh policies "intentionally and cruelly created by a Trump administration dead set on sending a hate-filled message that those seeking refuge are not welcome in America."

Tlaib added, "It's a dangerous ideology that rules our nation right now."

Departing the White House, Trump told reporters without evidence that Ocasio-Cortez' account of women being told to drink from a toilet was "a phony story she made it up."

As if in counterpoint to Democrats' testimony, Pence and eight GOP lawmakers toured a border station Friday in Donna, Texas, a vast collection of air-conditioned, interconnected tents built in May to temporarily handle 1,000 migrants and currently holding 800. Many lay on mats on the floor, covered by foil blankets as children watched TV.

With Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and Homeland Security Secretary Kevin McAleenan translating into Spanish, two children told Pence they'd walked two and

three months to arrive. He responded, "God bless you" in English and "gracias" in Spanish.

"Every family I spoke to said they were being well cared for," Pence said, criticizing Democrats' "harsh rhetoric." Later Friday, though, Pence visited an outdoor portal at the McAllen Border Station, where 384 single men were being held in cages with no cots.

"I was not surprised by what I saw," Pence said. "I knew we'd see a system that was overwhelmed."

Back at the House committee, four border state Republicans sat at the same rectangular witness table as their Democratic counterparts and blamed Democrats for migrants' problems.

Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, mocked Democrats' border trip, accusing them of posing "next to an empty parking lot while making up hyperbole for clips, Twitter followers and cynical politics." Ocasio-Cortez has 4.7 million Twitter followers.

Last week a report by the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general found children at some Texas border facilities who faced clothing shortages and lacked hot meals, while some adults were held for a week in a cell so crowded they had to stand.

The House will soon vote on one bill by Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-Texas, tightening oversight of the Homeland Security Department and another by Rep. Raul Ruiz, D-Calif., establishing care standards for seized migrants. Senate Democratic legislation would curb family separations and set health and treatment standards.

Also testifying Friday were Escobar and Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., who said federal treatment of migrants has "exceeded a level of degradation we should be ashamed is occurring on American soil."

Other Republicans who appeared were Arizona Reps. Debbie Lesko and Andy Biggs and Rep. Michael Cloud, R-Texas. □

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Competition to grow medical marijuana in Utah heats up

By MORGAN SMITH
Associated Press

NEPHI, Utah (AP) — The wide metal barn on the Utah alfalfa farm owned by Russell and Diane Jones will host their youngest son's wedding next month. By September, they hope the structure will be full of marijuana plants.

The Joneses are fourth-generation farmers, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and among 81 applicants for one of a handful of coveted spots as a licensed medical marijuana grower in conservative Utah.

Though leaders of their faith once opposed the bid to legalize medical marijuana, Russell Jones says he researched the drug's pain-relieving benefits as he battled Hodgkin's lymphoma. Now he and his wife want to be part of an emerging industry that some doubted would ever come to the state.

"This is groundbreaking for Utah," Diane Jones said. "Who doesn't want to make history?"

Others hoping to win licenses include larger operations that grow hemp, and a handful of out-of-state growers. State officials are expected to begin awarding up to 10 licenses later this month.

The state recently opened the licensing process to out-of-state growers, a change that makes locals like hemp processor Darren Johnson nervous.

"Does it bode well for me? No, but they want it to be seamless.

They don't want hiccups.



In this Wednesday, June 26, 2019, photo, Diane Jones looks at her alfalfa field, in Nephi, Utah.

Associated Press

And I get that," he said. Some applicants worry the process stacks the deck against local growers in favor of "Big Weed," or companies that have successfully grown cannabis in other states where the crop is legal.

The application requires a \$2,500 fee, and submissions are hundreds of pages long. Those who get a license pay \$100,000 every year to keep it, in addition to buying tools and facilities that can cost millions. Department of Agriculture officials said they are awarding extra points to applicants with community ties as they review applications.

Eight applications came

from out-of-state growers. The state is looking for farmers able to expand operations as demand increases while keeping costs low and growing plants free of mold and pesticides.

At an indoor facility in North Salt Lake, Troy Young tends to rows of hemp plants under the harsh, purple glow of LED lights designed to nurture growth.

Young grows industrial hemp, a nonpsychoactive cousin of marijuana legalized in Utah last year.

He is among a number of ambitious growers who have invested in equipment and set aside money hoping to receive a license to grow medical marijuana.

Cannabis in its various forms is challenging to grow and requires a lot of experimentation, he said.

"It's fun for me. I get to be a mad scientist," Young, 52, said.

He has a personal stake in marijuana legalization.

Young lost his mother to an opioid addiction. If she had access to a less destructive pain-relieving drug, like marijuana, he said, maybe she'd still be alive.

Marijuana has been shown to help ease chronic pain, and studies have suggested medical marijuana laws may reduce opioid prescribing. "There's a real need for it. It's not just about the high," Young said.

Johnson, the hemp proces-

sor, has a spacious warehouse in Salt Lake City with a team of technicians and equipment primed to grow medical marijuana.

One room is filled with large beakers.

Sticky hemp drips through paper filters and into the glass to extract CBD oil.

Hemp is his side business. Johnson works full-time in construction but views cultivating marijuana as a smart, long-term investment.

"Once (medical marijuana) becomes less taboo and people opt for that over an opiate-based drug, we're going to see more demand and a stronger market," he said.

Revenues from the state's medical cannabis program are projected to reach \$5.4 million in 2020 then grow to \$16.2 million in 2021, said Richard Oborn, director of the state health department's Center of Medical Cannabis.

Utah joined 33 states in legalizing medical marijuana after voters approved a new law last year.

Leaders of the state's predominant faith originally opposed the push to ask voters to approve medical marijuana but eventually struck a compromise with some advocates to allow medicinal use of the drug with more regulation.

Whoever wins the state's 10 grower licenses will have to grow the cannabis in Utah. The state also will choose licensed processors to make medical marijuana products to be sold in dispensaries expected to open next year. □

'It's powerful': Tropical storm starts lashing Louisiana



An SUV travels down Breakwater Drive in New Orleans, La., Friday, July 12, 2019, near the Orleans Marina as water moves in from Lake Pontchartrain from the storm surge from Tropical Storm Barry in the Gulf of Mexico.

Associated Press

By KEVIN MCGILL and JANET MCCONNAUGHEY

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Homeowners sandbagged their doors and tourists trying to get out of town jammed the airport Friday as Tropical Storm Barry began rolling in, threatening an epic drenching that could test how well New Orleans has strengthened its flood protections in the 14 years since Hurricane Katrina.

With the storm expected to blow ashore early Saturday near Morgan City as the first hurricane of the season, authorities rushed to close floodgates and raise the barriers around the New Orleans metropolitan area of 1.3 million people for fear of disastrous flooding.

The storm was expected to inflict the most damage on Louisiana and parts of Mississippi, with wind and rain affecting more than 3 million people.

About 3,000 National Guard troops, along with other rescue crews, were posted around Louisiana with boats, high-water vehicles and helicopters. Drinking water was lined up, and utility crews with

bucket trucks moved into position. "This is happening. ... Your preparedness window is shrinking," National Hurricane Center Director Ken Graham warned. He added: "It's powerful. It's strengthening. And water is going to be a big issue."

While 10,000 people or more in exposed, low-lying areas along the Gulf Coast were told to leave, no evacuations were ordered in New Orleans, where officials instead urged residents to "shelter in place" starting at 8 p.m.

"My concerns are just hoping it's not going to be another Katrina," said Donald Wells, a restaurant cook in New Orleans.

Forecasters said slow-moving Barry could unload 10 to 20 inches (25 to 50 centimeters) of rain through Sunday across a swath of Louisiana that includes New Orleans and Baton Rouge, as well as southwestern Mississippi, with pockets in Louisiana getting 25 inches (63 centimeters).

The storm's leading edges lashed the state with bands of rain for most of the day, and some coastal roads were already underwater. Barry was expected to arrive as a weak hurricane,

just barely over the 74 mph (119 kph) wind speed threshold. But authorities warned people not to be fooled.

"Nobody should take this storm lightly just because it's supposed to be a Category 1 when it makes landfall," Gov. John Bel Edwards said. "The real danger in this storm was never about the wind anyway. It's always been about the rain."

Authorities took unprecedented precautions: The governor said it was the first time all floodgates were sealed in the New Orleans-area Hurricane Risk Reduction System. Still, he said he didn't expect the river to spill over the levees.

Workers also shored up and raised the levee system in places with beams, sheet metal and other barriers.

Barry's downpours could prove to be a severe test of the improvements made to New Orleans' flood defenses since Katrina devastated the city in 2005. The Mississippi River is already running abnormally high because of heavy spring rains and snowmelt upstream, and the ground around New Orleans is sog-

gy because of an 8-inch (20-centimeter) torrent earlier this week.

The Mississippi is expected to crest Saturday at about 19 feet (5.8 meters) in New Orleans, where the levees protecting the city range from about 20 to 25 feet (6 to 7.5 meters) in height. That could leave only a small margin of safety in some places, particularly if the storm were to change direction or intensity.

"The river should be taken seriously. It's a really powerful river," said Nadia Jenkins of New Orleans. She hadn't yet decided whether to leave but wasn't taking any chances: "We're prepared. We've got stuff stocked up. Car is gassed."

Employees at a Costco in New Orleans said bottled water was selling quickly. Lifelong resident Terrence Williams was getting supplies and said he has a few simple rules for big storms.

"Stock up on water. Stock up food. Get ready for the storm — ride it out," he said. Scientists say global warming is responsible for more intense and more frequent storms and flooding, but without extensive study, they cannot directly link a

single weather event to the changing climate.

Late Friday afternoon, Barry was about 70 miles (115 kilometers) southeast of Morgan City, with winds of 65 mph (100 kph). Tracking forecasts showed the storm moving toward Chicago, swelling the Mississippi River basin with water that must eventually flow south again.

President Donald Trump declared a federal emergency for Louisiana, authorizing the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate relief efforts.

In Baton Rouge, Kaci Douglas and her 15-year-old son, Juan Causey, were among dozens filling sandbags at a fire station. She planned to sandbag the door of her townhouse.

"I told my son, it's better to be safe than sorry," she said. In New Orleans, a group of neighbors cleaned out the storm drains on their street. Working as a team to lift the heavy metal covers off, they discovered that most of the drains were full of dirt, leaves and garbage.

All over town, people parked their cars on the city's medians — referred to around here as "neutral grounds" — in hopes their vehicles would be safe on the slightly elevated strips.

Tourists converged on the airport in hopes of catching an early flight and getting out of town ahead of the storm. At least one convention — that of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority — was cut short by a day. A Rolling Stones concert was postponed from Sunday to Monday. Katrina caused catastrophic flooding in New Orleans 14 years ago and was blamed for more than 1,800 deaths in Louisiana and other states, by some estimates.

In its aftermath, the Army Corps of Engineers began a multibillion-dollar hurricane-protection system that isn't complete. The work included repairs and improvements to some 350 miles (560 kilometers) of levees and more than 70 pumping stations. □



In this June 26, 2019 file photo UCLA gynecologist James Heaps, center, and his wife, Deborah Heaps, arrive at Los Angeles Superior Court.

Associated Press

9 more women file lawsuits against UCLA gynecologist

By STEFANIE DAZIO
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Nine more women have alleged in two lawsuits they were sexually assaulted by a former gynecologist who worked for the University of California, Los Angeles. The lawsuits state the women were assaulted by Dr. James Heaps during examinations between 1989 and 2017. The women allege the inappropriate touching sometimes without gloves was not for any legitimate medical purpose and solely for Heaps' sexual gratification. Heaps has been criminally charged with the sexual battery of two patients but denies any wrongdoing. He has pleaded not guilty. The most recent lawsuits were filed Thursday and Friday in Los Angeles Superior Court against the doctor, the university system's regents and other parties. Three of the nine women were UCLA students at the time of the alleged assaults; the other six were not students and saw Heaps at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. UCLA Health spokeswoman Rhonda Curry said in an email Friday that 117 for-

mer patients had reached out to UCLA with "concerns about their interactions" with Heaps. The university is contacting them for follow-up interviews. Curry said an additional 135 former patients expressed support for the doctor. She declined to comment on the new lawsuits. One of the women in this week's lawsuits was a 21-year-old UCLA undergraduate student in 1995 when she visited the student health center for a birth control prescription refill. The woman told The Associated Press in a phone interview Friday she was confused by Heaps' examination and questions about her sex life. The AP does not identify victims of sexual assault. The woman, who is now 45 and lives in San Mateo County, said after she heard about Heaps' arrest from a friend that she wanted to tell her story and try to make her two daughters' future experiences better, especially for her older child. "I want her to be able to say, 'Hey, you know what? My mom, this is how she led her life, this is what's important to her, this is how she raised us,'" she said. □



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U.S. man accused of sex abuse at Kenyan orphanage he founded

By MARK SCOLFORO
Associated Press

LANCASTER, Pa. (AP) — A convicted sex offender went on to establish an orphanage in Kenya where he preyed on children under the guise of missionary work, according to federal prosecutors who announced Friday that he was being charged with sexually molesting four teenage girls.

Gregory Dow, 60, of Lancaster, is accused of four counts of violating a U.S. law against sexual contact with minors in foreign countries, U.S. Attorney William McSwain said. There likely are other victims, investigators said, but tracking the children who lived in the orphanage has been difficult. Dow is accused of abuse from 2013 until 2017, when prosecutors say he fled back to the United States to avoid prosecution in Kenya. The Dow Family Children's Home in Boito, in a rural area west of Nairobi, closed in September 2017. At one point, the orphanage housed more than 80 children, many of them with diseases, according to the LNP newspaper.

One girl said Dow accused her of having sex with someone else and told her "that she therefore had to have sex with him as well," according to the government's detention motion. Another told agents she tried to brace herself against him but couldn't stop him, the document says.

Dow "purported to be a Christian missionary who would care for these orphans. They called him 'Dad.' But instead of being a father figure for them, he preyed on their youth and vulnerability," prosecutors



U.S. Attorney William McSwain announces the arrest of Gregory Dow, 60, of Lancaster, Pa. during a news conference at the Lancaster County Courthouse Friday July 12, 2019, in Lancaster, Pa.

Associated Press

said in the court filing.

Dow "used force and coercion to perpetrate the most heinous of crimes, preying on vulnerable children for his own sexual gratification," prosecutors wrote. There are also allegations of physical abuse "inflicted under the guise of strict discipline."

Dow told LNP this year that he had not done anything wrong and that he would get a lawyer if Kenyan authorities attempted to extradite him.

"There's not much I can do. I know the truth," he told the paper in a January story. "They made the accusations falsely, and they got out of hand."

A federal judge in Philadelphia on Friday ordered Gregory Dow to remain jailed until a detention hearing next week. A public defender will represent him.

Kenyan authorities told The Associated Press that two girls escaped from the orphanage in September 2017 and notified them of abuse allegations. An investigation identified more

victims and allegations of physical, psychological and sexual abuse, they said.

Dow and his wife, Mary Rose Dow, had fled by the time police arrived at the home three days later, Kenyan officials said.

Dow was able to fly out, but Mary Rose Dow was arrested and in January 2018 was found guilty of two counts of cruelty for helping implant birth control in girls at the orphanage, Kenyan authorities said. A message left at a phone listing linked to Mary Rose Dow was not returned Friday.

In the motion that sought to keep Dow behind bars as he awaits trial, prosecutors described him as a previously convicted sex offender, noting his 1996 guilty plea to assault to commit sexual abuse in Iowa. He received two years of probation and was ordered to register as a sex offender for a decade, the U.S. attorney's office told a judge. That case showed Dow represents "a persistent danger to the community," prosecutors said. □

Brexit, domestic drama and Trump drive UK leadership race

By JILL LAWLESS
 Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The race to become Britain's next leader has been dominated by Brexit, but disrupted by domestic drama and Donald Trump.

Britain's 2016 decision to leave the European Union divided the country, upended its politics and ultimately defeated Prime Minister Theresa May. She resigned as Conservative Party leader last month after failing to win Parliament's backing for divorce terms with the EU.

May's announcement triggered a leadership contest in which a 10-strong field of contenders was whittled down by Conservative lawmakers to two: Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt and Boris Johnson, his predecessor in that job.

Party members across the country are voting by postal ballot, with the result due to be announced July 23. The winner will take over from May as prime minister the next day.

A look at the contest so far:
BREXIT PROMISES

Britain's bungled Brexit has sapped confidence in the political system and seen voters desert the governing Conservatives in droves.

Hunt and Johnson both vow to take Britain out of the EU, and say they will go back to EU leaders and get an improved deal that Britain's Parliament can accept.

If that fails, they say Britain should leave anyway. Johnson says exiting on the current scheduled date of Oct. 31 is a "do or die" issue.

Hunt would be willing to delay for a short time if a deal was in sight, and said Friday he couldn't guarantee Britain will have left the

EU by Christmas.

He told the BBC that "prime ministers should only make promises they know they can deliver."

Critics accuse both men of making unrealistic promises. EU leaders insist they will not reopen the withdrawal agreement they struck with May, and economists

them feel good," said Simon Usherwood, deputy director of the U.K. in a Changing Europe think-tank.

"The last few years have been difficult for the Conservatives, to put it mildly. Johnson is a person to give a pep talk, rally the troops and get everything going

In contrast 52-year-old Hunt's biggest gaffe was a slip of the tongue in which he claimed his wife is Japanese.

She is Chinese.

DIPLOMATIC DRAMA

The contest took a swerve when a newspaper published leaked cables from Kim Darroch, Britain's am-

including by many Conservatives. Johnson conceded that his reluctance to publicly back Darroch had been "a factor" in the ambassador's decision to quit. But he insisted his views had been "misrepresented to Kim."

DECISION TIME

Britain's next leader is being chosen by about 160,000 members of the Conservative Party. They amount to about 0.25% of the overall electorate — and are not a very representative sample.

Conservative members are overwhelmingly white and middle class, largely male and strongly in favor of Brexit.

That gives Johnson, who helped lead the 2016 Brexit campaign, a natural edge over Hunt, who campaigned to remain. Hunt has performed well on the campaign trail, accusing Johnson of shirking scrutiny and lacking substance, while presenting himself as the serious, stable candidate. But it may be too little, too late to overtake the front-runner.

ROCKY ROAD AHEAD

The new prime minister will have barely three months to break Britain's Brexit deadlock and get a divorce deal through Parliament by Oct. 31, or prepare the country for a rocky no-deal exit.

But a majority of lawmakers oppose leaving without a divorce agreement, and will use every tool they have to stop it. Johnson has refused to rule out suspending Parliament if it tries to block Britain's departure.

Treasury chief Philip Hammond, who is likely to lose his job after May leaves, said shutting down Parliament would "provoke a constitutional crisis." Former Prime Minister John Major says he'll take Johnson to court if he tried to bypass Parliament.

May warned her successor that overcoming Britain's Brexit divisions could be harder than they think.

"I had assumed mistakenly that the tough bit of the negotiation was with the EU," she told the Daily Mail.



Britain's Conservative Party leadership candidate Jeremy Hunt, centre, with Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Amber Rudd, centre left, arrive for the Conservative Party leadership hustings meeting in Maidstone, southern England, Thursday July 11, 2019.

Associated Press

say leaving without a deal on divorce terms would plunge Britain into recession.

Those warnings have had little impact on the leadership race. Institute for Government researcher Tim Durrant wrote in a recent blog post that the debate was "increasingly untheatrical from the world as it is and instead speaks to the world as Conservative members would like it to be."

QUESTIONS OF CHARACTER

Bookies and pollsters say Johnson — a flaxen-haired, Latin-spouting former London mayor — is the favorite to beat the competent but uncharismatic Hunt.

A born entertainer and attention-seeker, 55-year-old Johnson is seen by many Conservatives as a politician who can win back voters and defeat rival parties on both the left and the right.

"He knows how to rub them on their tummy and make

again."

But questions about character have long dogged Johnson, and they resurfaced last month after police were called to a blazing row between the politician and his partner, Carrie Symonds. The story dominated the news for several days and revived memories of past Johnson misdeeds.

When he was a journalist, Johnson was fired for fabricating a quote. As a lawmaker, he was sacked from a senior Tory job for lying about an extramarital affair. As foreign secretary he worsened the plight of a British-Iranian woman detained in Tehran by saying incorrectly that she was a journalist. He has made racist and offensive comments — calling Papua New Guineans cannibals, comparing Muslim women who wear face-covering veils to "letter boxes" — that he shrugs off as plain-speaking or jokes taken out of context.

ambassador to Washington, describing the Trump administration as dysfunctional, clumsy and inept. The president branded the ambassador a "pompous fool," and Darroch found himself struck off the White House guest list. He resigned Wednesday, saying it had become impossible for him to do his job.

In London, embarrassment at the leak was followed by anger that a respected British diplomat had been forced from his job by the U.S. president. Hunt joined other senior politicians in praising Darroch and chiding Trump, saying that "allies need to treat each other with respect."

Johnson, however, merely stressed his good relations with the White House and the importance of the trans-Atlantic relationship. Johnson may be calculating that it's best not to anger Britain's most important ally, but his response has been widely criticized,



Italian court says wrong Eritrean accused of trafficking

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO**
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A court in Palermo, Sicily, ruled Friday that the wrong Eritrean man was arrested and tried as a migrant smuggling kingpin and ordered him released from jail, a ruling cheered by supporters who had for years championed his claim of mistaken identity.

Defense lawyer Michele Calantropo told The Associated Press that his client, Medhanie Tesfamariam Behre, "cried for joy" when the court ordered him released from jail, three years after he had been extradited to Italy from Sudan on a charge of human trafficking. But while the court exonerated him of the trafficking charge, it convicted him of a lesser charge — aiding illegal immigration — for helping two cousins reach Italy, based on investigations conducted after Behre was extradited to Italy, Calantropo said.

The court sentenced him on that charge to five years in prison. But since Behre already spent three years behind bars under a warrant for the wrong man, it was likely under Italy's justice system that, as a first



Medhanie Tesfamariam Behre, an Eritrean man arrested and tried as a migrant smuggler, sits behind the bars during a trial inside the Ucciardone bunker hall in the Sicilian town of Palermo, Italy, Friday, July 12, 2019.

offender, he won't have to do any more time in jail.

The also court convicted five co-defendants of aiding illegal immigration, Calantropo said. Prosecutors had argued the defendant was Medhane Yehdego Mered, an alleged human trafficking kingpin who profited as thousands of migrants were smuggled to Italy on unseaworthy boats launched from Libya. They had asked

the court to convict him and give a 14-year prison term. "The court recognized that it was a person involved in aiding illegal immigration," Lo Voi said. "Thus (he was) not a poor carpenter unjustly persecuted," the Italian news agency ANSA quoted him as saying.

Even as the suspect was extradited to Italy in 2016, doubts rose up about whether prosecutors actu-

ally had the right man. One of the defendant's sisters, who lives in Norway, said she recognized her brother in extradition photos but said he was living a "normal" life in Sudan and had nothing to do with human smuggling.

After his extradition to Italy, a Sweden-based refugee advocate who is Eritrean, Meron Estefanos, said she started receiving calls from people who told her au-

thorities had arrested the wrong man.

Calantropo said his client was a refugee from Eritrea who was in Sudan in hopes of himself migrating from Africa. He was arrested in Khartoum, Sudan, with the help of Britain's National Crime Agency. During the trial, the man told the court that Sudanese police beat him and stole his identity document.

Calantropo presented an expert's analysis of a voice that been recorded in phone conversations intercepted by Italian police, who concluded the voice was not Behre's.

During the trial, the lawyer told the court more than 28,000 signatures were gathered on petitions backing the defendant's wrong identification claim. Outside the courthouse Friday, his supporters rejoiced at the ruling. They wore T-shirts emblazoned with Behre's photo and the words "Free our innocent brother."

In the past few years, thousands of migrants have drowned or gone missing in the Mediterranean Sea when their flimsy, overcrowded smuggling boats sank or capsized. □

AU envoy: Sudan military, protesters to sign political deal

By **FAY ABUEL GASIM**
NOHA ELHENNAWY
Associated Press

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — A political transition agreement between Sudan's military and a pro-democracy coalition is expected to be signed Saturday, a top African Union diplomat said early Friday.

Mohammed el-Hassan Labat's announcement came just hours after the Sudanese military claimed it had thwarted an attempted military coup.

The transition agreement sets up a joint sovereign council that will rule for a little over three years while elections are organized.

Ethiopian mediator Mahmoud Dirir told reporters that the political declaration will be "debated on, discussed and signed at the same time."



Sudanese people celebrate in the streets of Khartoum after ruling generals and protest leaders announced they have reached an agreement on the disputed issue of a new governing body on Friday, July 5, 2019.

The deal is meant to break the political deadlock that has gripped the country following the overthrow of autocratic President Omar al-Bashir in April.

Lt. Gen. Gamal Omar, a member of Sudan's military council, said the coup attempt took place late Thursday, just days after the military and the pro-

democracy coalition had agreed to the joint sovereign council.

In a statement, Omar said at least 16 active and retired military officers were arrested. Security forces were pursuing the group's leader and additional officers who took part in plotting the coup attempt, he said, but the council did not reveal the name of the attempted leader, his rank or other details.

Tarek Abdel Meguid, an FDFC leader, voiced skepticism about the military's announcement of a failed coup, calling it a hoax meant to pressure pro-democracy forces into signing the deal.

"They (the military) want to say that the situation in Sudan is very volatile, and that there is a deep state with people capable of

staging a military coup, so we should hurry up and sign and leave any points of difference to be discussed later," Abdel Meguid told the Associated Press.

Last week, the military and FDFC representatives announced that they had reached a power-sharing agreement amid robust African and international pressure.

A military leader is to head the council for the first 21 months, followed by a civilian leader for the next 18. They also agreed on an independent Sudanese investigation into the deadly crackdown by security forces on the protests last month — though it's unclear if anyone will be held accountable. The military also agreed to restore the internet after a weekslong blackout. □

Despite US warnings, Russian S-400 systems land in Turkey

By SUZAN FRASER
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) —

The first shipment of a Russian missile defense system has arrived in Turkey, the Turkish Defense Ministry said Friday, moving the country closer to possible U.S. sanctions and a new standoff with Washington.

A Defense Ministry statement said “the first group of equipment” of the S-400 air defense systems has reached the Murat Air Base near the capital, Ankara. Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said three planes carrying the equipment landed at the airfield on Friday, adding that the delivery would continue in the coming days.

The U.S. has strongly urged NATO member Turkey to pull back from the deal — reportedly costing more than \$2 billion — warning the country that it will face economic sanctions under the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act if it goes ahead with the purchase. It has also said Turkey won’t be allowed to participate in the program to produce high-tech F-35 fighter jets. Although U.S. President Donald Trump expressed sympathy toward Turkey’s decision to purchase the Russian system during a meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of a G-20 meeting in Japan, Washington has repeatedly said that the Russian system is incompatible with NATO systems and is a threat to the F-35.

Sanctions would mark a new low in the already-tense relations between Turkey and the U.S. Last year, the United States imposed sanctions on Turkey over its detention of an American pastor, triggering a Turkish currency crisis. The deal with Russia — the



Military vehicles and equipment, parts of the S-400 air defense systems, are unloaded from a Russian transport aircraft, at Murat military airport in Ankara, Turkey, Friday, July 12, 2019.

Associated Press

first such deal between Russia and a NATO member — has also raised concerns that Turkey is drifting closer to Moscow’s sphere of influence.

The acting U.S. secretary of defense, Mark Esper, said Washington was aware that Turkey began taking delivery of a Russian-made system.

Esper, who is expected to be officially nominated next week to be defense secretary, told reporters at the Pentagon that the U.S. remains unwilling to allow Turkey to acquire the U.S. F-35 stealth fighter, as long as it has the S-400.

Esper said he planned to speak to his Turkish counterpart later in the day.

The prospect of a further rupture in Turkey’s relations with Washington also raises a delicate issue rarely mentioned in public: the status of American nuclear weapons stored at Turkey’s Incirlik air base. Turkey has had

a nuclear role in NATO for decades, but this new split is likely to cause some in Washington to question the wisdom of keeping those nuclear bombs at Incirlik. Locations of U.S. nuclear weapons abroad are not publicly acknowledged by the U.S. as a matter of policy.

Turkey has refused to bow to U.S. pressure, insisting that choosing which defense equipment to purchase is a matter of national sovereignty.

“We’ve always said regarding the S400s that it’s an agreement that has been finalized and the process continues to progress,” Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told reporters. “There’s no problem and the process will continue in a healthy way going forward.”

In Russia, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters: “Everything is going strictly in compliance with

the agreements and contracts signed.” He would not comment on a time-frame for the delivery but insisted that both parties are committed to complying with the contract.

Soner Cagaptay, director of the Turkish Research Program at The Washington Institute, said Turkey’s purchase of the Russian system marks a “tectonic” shift in Turkey’s security and foreign policy.

“Unfortunately, it looks like not only will there be U.S. sanctions but also probably a Turkey-U.S. rupture,” Cagaptay said. “This is tectonic because a rift with the United States now — at a time when Turkish-EU ties are also under strain — which would also impact Turkish-NATO ties, would leave Turkey alone against Russia for the first time in nearly 180 years.”

A Turkish Defense Ministry video showed two planes landing at the air base and

unloading various military trucks, some of which appeared to be carrying parts of the system. The Russian Ministry of Defense also shared a video showing the equipment being loaded onto the planes and then being offloaded in Ankara. Turkish media reports have said Turkey is expected to take delivery of two S-400 batteries.

Turkey has said it was forced to buy the S-400s because Washington refused to supply the American-made Patriot systems to Turkey.

U.S. officials have since encouraged Turkey to buy the Patriot missile defense system instead of the S-400s. Turkey has said the offer does not meet its requirements, including possible future joint production.

On Friday, Akar said, however, that Turkey was also considering purchasing the American system.

“Our talks on the Patriot issue are continuing,” the state-run Anadolu Agency quoted Akar as saying. “As long as they meet the criteria, of course we are considering the procurement of the Patriots to cover our need for a long-range air and missile defense system.” Akar said Turkish military personnel were being trained in Russia and in Turkey on how to install and use the system.

The U.S. has already stopped training Turkish pilots on the F-35, and given Ankara until the end of July to get its personnel out of the U.S.

Turkey maintains that it has fulfilled all of its financial obligations concerning the F-35 program and cannot be excluded from the project. Turkey has refused to say where it intends to deploy the S-400. Turkish media reports have said it could take until October for the system to be fully operational. □

Somalia extremist attack in port city of Kismayo kills 10

Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)

— A Somali official says at least 10 people have been killed in an extremist attack on a hotel in the port city

of Kismayo. Abdi Ahmed, a local district official, told The Associated Press Friday night that the death toll may rise as fighting is continuing inside the Asasey

Hotel between the extremist gunmen and security forces. He said gunfire is continuing inside the hotel. He said most of the victims were patrons of the hotel,

which is often frequented by lawmakers and local officials. He said the victims include two journalists.

Somalia’s al-Shabab Islamic extremist rebels have

claimed the responsibility for the attack.

The attack started with a suicide car bomb blast and then gunmen stormed into the hotel. □

Duterte critics laud UN vote to scrutinize drug killings

By JIM GOMEZ

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— Critics of the Philippine president's deadly anti-drug campaign said Friday that a vote by the U.N.'s top human rights body to look into the thousands of deaths of suspects is a crucial step toward bringing perpetrators to justice and helping end the killings.

President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman, however, condemned the resolution adopted by the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva as Western meddling in Philippine government affairs and questioned the validity of the narrow vote. A former police chief said he was ready to have his head chopped off if the killings were state-sponsored.

About 6,600 people, most of them accused of petty drug crimes, have been killed in the crackdown that Duterte launched as his centerpiece project when he took office in mid-2016. But nongovernment groups claim a much higher death toll, including many suspects killed by motorcycle-riding gunmen who human rights groups suspect were deployed by police.

Duterte and the police have denied authorizing extrajudicial killings.

However, he has repeatedly threatened drug suspects with death in tele-



Human rights advocates display placards during a news conference following United Nations Human Rights Council's resolution in Geneva, Friday, July 12, 2019 in suburban Quezon city, northeast of Manila, Philippines.

vised speeches and encouraged law enforcers to shoot suspects who fight back.

He has warned that the crackdown will be more dangerous for suspects in the final three years of his six-year term.

The U.N. Human Rights Council voted 18-14 with 15 abstentions Thursday to approve the Iceland-initiated resolution, which called on the Philippine government to take all steps to prevent extrajudicial killings and

asked the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a comprehensive report on the Philippines.

The resolution called for Philippine government cooperation, "including by facilitating country visits and preventing and refraining from all acts of intimidation or retaliation."

Duterte, a former prosecutor, has repeatedly lashed out at U.N. human rights experts critical of his anti-drug campaign.

Associated Press

Separately, an International Criminal Court prosecutor is examining information about the drug killings.

"The door of domestic investigation may have been shut, but the windows of international scrutiny are beginning to open up toward justice for the Filipino people," said Sen. Leila de Lima, Duterte's most vocal critic, who was jailed two years ago on drug charges she said were fabricated to silence her.

While the U.N.-proposed

action would be less than a commission of inquiry that activists have wanted, it would be "a clear signal to Duterte and his cohorts that truth and justice will prevail and that the perpetrators and masterminds behind the atrocities will be held accountable," de Lima said in a statement from her detention cell.

"This vote provides hope for thousands of bereaved families in the Philippines and countless more Filipinos bravely challenging the Duterte administration's murderous 'war on drugs,'" said Nicholas Bequelin of Amnesty International.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo questioned the resolution's validity, saying only 18 nations in the 47-member U.N. body voted for it.

"The resolution demonstrates how the Western powers are scornful of our sovereign exercise of protecting our people from the scourge of prohibited drugs," Panelo said.

"The resolution is grotesquely one-sided, outrageously narrow and maliciously partisan."

Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, a former national police chief who first enforced the drug crackdown, said he was not afraid to be investigated and that police never tolerated extrajudicial killings. □

S. Korea proposes UN probe over Japanese sanctions claims

By TONG-HYUNG KIM

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— South Korea said Friday it wants an investigation by the United Nations or another international body as it continues to reject Japanese claims that Seoul could not be trusted to faithfully implement sanctions against North Korea.

Kim You-geun, deputy chief of South Korea's presidential national security office, said South Korea has been thoroughly implementing U.N. sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear weapons program. He demanded that Japan provide evidence for claims made by Prime



Kim You-geun, deputy chief of South Korea's presidential national security office, speaks during a press conference at the presidential Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, July 12, 2019.

Associated Press

Minister Shinzo Abe and his conservative aides that there may have been il-

legal transfers of sensitive materials from South Korea to North Korea.

Tokyo last week tightened the approval process for Japanese shipments of photoresists and other sensitive materials to South Korea, saying such materials can be exported only to trustworthy trading partners.

The move, which could potentially hurt South Korean technology companies that manufacture semiconductors and display screens used in TVs and smartphones, has triggered a full-blown diplomatic dispute between the countries that further soured relations long troubled over Japan's brutal colonial rule of Korea before the end of World War II.

Kim said the Seoul government proposes Japan accept an inquiry by the U.N. or another international body over the export controls of both countries to end "needless arguments" and to clearly prove whether the Japanese claims are true or not.

"If the result shows that our government has done nothing wrong, the Japanese government should not only apologize but also immediately withdraw the exports restrictions that have the characteristics of a (political) retaliation. There also should be a thorough investigation on (any) Japanese violation," he said. □

UN Security Council visits Colombia as peace worries mount

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO
Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)

— Maria del Pilar Hurtado's son screamed in anguish at the sight of his mother's dead body on a dirt road in the poor community in northern Colombia the family called home.

He kicked his feet on the ground and grasped his face in his hands. Passersby stopped and watched the boy's agonizing grief but did little to console him.

The wrenching scene was caught on a cellphone camera and quickly made headlines around Colombia in June. For many, the social leader's violent death was another painstaking reminder that in numerous parts of the South American nation peace remains elusive.

Now the United Nations Security Council is getting a firsthand look at the challenges of peace nearly three years into Colombia's historic accord with leftist rebels as they visit Friday with the nation's president, politicians and former rebels at a time of mounting concern.

The council ambassadors kicked off their trip by expressing their steadfast support for the accord ending Latin America's longest-running conflict, even as observers warn that implementation needs to move more quickly to avoid more anguishing scenes of death.

Despite the concerns, Peruvian Ambassador Gustavo Meza Cuadra maintained that the accord, "Continues to be an example not just for Latin America but the entire world."

President Ivan Duque, elected last year on a platform promising to change key aspects of the accord, said his administration stands committed to help-



Peruvian Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, the president of UN Security Council, from left, Colombia's President Ivan Duque, and British Ambassador Jonathan Guy, arrive to deliver a joint statement to reporters in Bogota, Colombia, Friday, July 12, 2019.

ing ex-combatants who genuinely want to leave a life of violence behind but won't tolerate those involved in new crimes.

"We should think big and look to the future," he said following a breakfast with the Security Council. "And construct a peace where the law is the chief guarantor."

Colombia's government signed the accord with members of the former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in 2016 after four years of negotiations in Cuba. Since then, most of the 13,000 ex-combatants have begun the transition to civilian life. Thousands of weapons used in more than five decades of conflict have been melted down and made into a monument in Bogota. The former rebels have formed a political party and now have congress leaders and senators.

Despite those important advances, analysts are concerned that Colombia's government hasn't done enough to establish

a presence in vast remote stretches once controlled by rebels and now in the hands of competing illegal armed groups involved in the drug trade.

Hurtado's killing marked one more in an alarming string of deaths of social leaders and ex-combatants. According to the non-profit Somos Defensores, 155 activists were killed in 2018, up from 106 such deaths the year before. Colombia's ombudsman's office says 462 social leaders have been killed between January 2016 and the beginning of this year.

"The conflict with the FARC — or the majority of the FARC — ended," said Cynthia Arnsen, director of the Latin America program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, referring to the acronym used by former rebels. "But post-war with the FARC is not post-conflict for Colombia."

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a recent report that he regrets the "polarization and division" in

Colombia over elements of the peace deal. He called on the government to ensure that any changes to the accord respect commitments made to rebels who laid down arms.

"It's going too slow," Adam Isacson, a Colombia expert at the Washington Office on Latin America, said of the implementation. "If the government had taken advantage and gotten more of a presence in these areas you would not be seeing the same levels of violence." The peace accord remains divisive in Colombia, where many still balk at the sight of former rebels serving as legislators in congress. The conflict between leftist rebels, right-wing paramilitaries and the state left at least 250,000 people dead, 60,000 disappeared and millions displaced.

Many have doubted Duque's commitment to peace after his election on a platform that promised to change the accord but not "tear it to shreds." Thus far, he's been unable to push forward his proposals. After

meeting with the Security Council Friday, he noted that during the first year of his presidency, the number of economic development projects led by ex-rebels like initiatives to grow coffee and pineapples has multiplied, from two to 25. In an April report, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, which is charged with monitoring the accord's implementation, noted that 31 percent of the accord's pledges have not yet begun the first steps toward execution.

Nonetheless, the institute said Colombia's pace is "comparable to other successful peace processes." Hurtado, a mother of four, had already fled one home after receiving death threats, only to settle in a new area and find herself targeted again, community groups said.

As an activist, she had spoken up for victims and denounced crimes like forced disappearances. More recently, she was helping poor residents who had settled on lands that did not belong to them, according to local media. She reportedly made a living by recycling garbage.

Social leaders in Colombia are hoping the Security Council's visit will help accelerate implementation and shine a light on deaths like Hurtado's.

"The whole promise of the peace agreement was to do something that had never been accomplished in Colombian history, which was to overcome this sense that there were two Colombias," Arnsen said. "One of the big unanswered questions of the peace process is why the government was so slow and either unwilling or incapable of occupying these spaces vacated by the FARC." □

Brazil: Bolsonaro says he may nominate son as US ambassador

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro says he's considering nominating his son Eduardo to be ambassador to the United States. Bolsonaro said at a news conference Thursday that nominating his son is, in his words, "something on my radar. Yes, it's possible."

He said Eduardo Bolsonaro is a friend of U.S. President Donald Trump's children, speaks English and Spanish and has experience abroad.

The president said the nomination "would be the perfect message to Washington."

The nomination would have to be confirmed by the Senate, and critics are complaining it would violate laws against nepotism.

They also argue he's not qualified. Eduardo Bolsonaro currently is a congressman. The ambassadorship has been vacant since Jan. 1, when Jair Bolsonaro took office. □

LOCAL



Children's Book starring Aruba about Friendship and Diversity

SAN NICOLAS — Aruba Today recently had the honor to meet the Lipoffs from Maryland, a remarkable American family that fell in love with Aruba a long time ago. We met at the Red Anchor in San Nicolas for a very special reason. Here it is where the book 'Super Coco; "Will You Be My Friend"' was born. An idea that sprouted out of an encounter between a black rooster and a pigeon. "This is a book about making friendships, diversity, acceptance, animals, the habitat and all with a backdrop of our beloved Aruba," says Jay M. Lipoff.

Julie and Jay with their two sons come to the island frequently, and the book has played an important role in their visits since it was published. "I have been visiting Aruba since 1998. It's a wonderful place, and now with my family, we head out every couple of years." The last time they were here they came across a black rooster and a pigeon hanging out together day after day near Seroe Colorado, on the way to Baby Beach. "We chuckled and started to make up a story. We named the rooster Coco because he was near a vendor's ice chest with Super Coco written on the side of it." The story went from there and eventually resulted in a colorful book with amazing il-

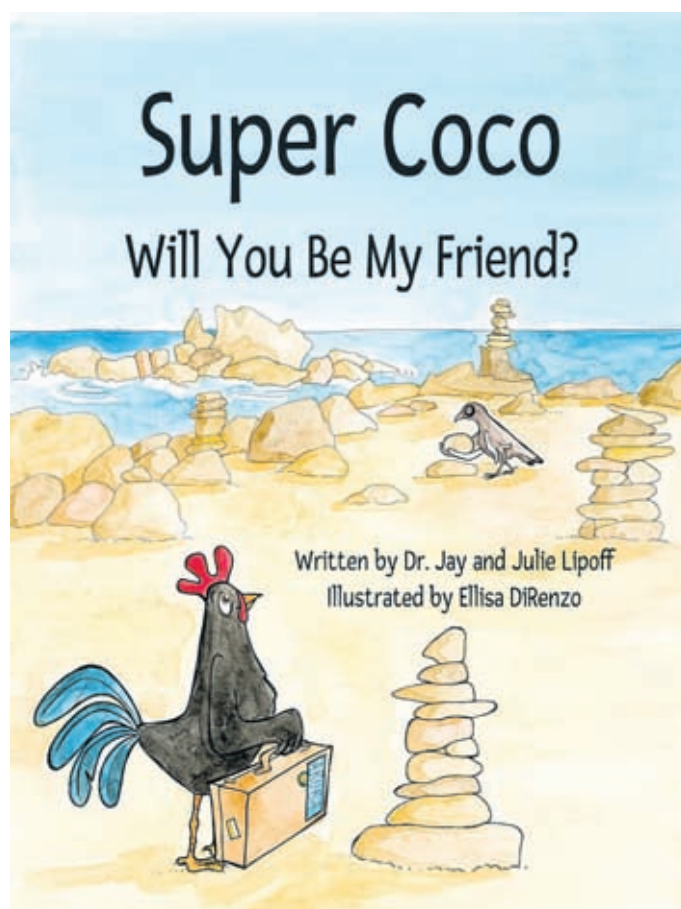


lustrations showing Aruba's animals in their natural habitat. The book not only has a deeper message that is important to children, but is also shows the island's typical flora and fauna. In a playful way children learn that it is okay to have a friend that looks very different from themselves.

The book has brought the Lipoffs friendships for sure. An example is with Mr. Coco, the man that sells the coconut water on the side of the road near the anchor. The family connects easily with the local community, and that is what they love to do. "We try to absorb as much of local life as possible while we are here, and support local restaurants and venues. Every time we come here we buy Mr. Coco's desserts, we are all hooked on his sweets", Jay says laughing. The family donates a portion of the proceeds back to animal organizations in Aruba concerned with the health of the animals and finding them homes.

Super Coco not only fascinates children in Aruba, the Lipoffs have brought the book under the attention of schools in the United States too. "I just read it to a 3rd grade class and they loved it. I showed them pictures of all of the animals from my trips and we discussed visiting Aruba," Jay says. He has written the book together with his wife Julie over the last two years and it is now published on Amazon, and for sale in Bruna Bookstore on the island. The author is sorting out to get more books to the island to make sure that more children get to know Super Coco, and his story about friendship and acceptance. As Lipoff wrote on Facebook: "We would like to bring this message to #children everywhere about understanding the difficulties that come with making new #friends, but also about opening their hearts and having a willingness to welcome new ones regardless of their differences; learning how amazing Aruba is with its diversity of culture and people, as well as, learning about the island of #Aruba and the #animals that live there."

For more information: Facebook Super Coco.





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EAGLE BEACH — Costa Linda Beach Resort prides itself on being a great workplace with wonderful employees who help make our members and guests feel at home during their stay. Throughout the years, the talents and efforts of our employees have made Costa Linda Beach Resort into the successful resort it is today.

Guests return each year to the same smiling and welcoming faces of our valued employees and it is with great pride that Costa Linda acknowledges the nine star employees who have been at the helm of the resort for 25, 26 and 27 years.

these times. Celebrating their 27-year anniversary are Beatriz Angela, Felicitas Layos Tobias, and Aivena Cornelis. Recognition is also given to Fernando Ceron Fernandez and Maria Thiel for their 26-year anniversary. Last but not least are Alejandra Cathlin Suarez, Esperanza Desbarida, Swiendra Hengeveld, and Fritz Emmanuel, who are the four dedicated staff members celebrating 25-years of employment at Costa Linda.

In its 28 years of operation, Costa Linda now boast having 20 employees working 25 or more years.

These employees exemplify the quality employees Costa Linda strive to have, providing excellent service day in and day out. In an ever changing and evolving industry, the one constant were these employees, who have been with the resort during

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46 UA students obtain their Academic Foundation Year certification



ORANJESTAD — 46 University of Aruba students received their certificates for successful completion of the Academic Foundation Year program. They completed their first year in higher education, a year in which they worked on academic skills, language skills, study choice and personal development. This year 65 students started and 54 students completed the program. In addition to the 46 graduates, an additional 8 students received their grade transcripts to certify the courses that they followed within the program.

During the commencement ceremony, led

by program administrator Kevin Richardson, students Stephany Lewis and Amanda Croes testified on the impact of the program on their personal development. They emphasized the growth that they experienced as participants in the program, not only a growth in knowledge and skills, but also a growth in confidence and determination in the choices that they are making.

Many program participants are initially still in an orientation phase, looking for a definitive study choice. Therefore, they are allowed and encouraged to follow modules offered by the faculty programs of the university as well as to

take up apprenticeship positions and follow on-line courses. Half the of the students that successfully completed the Academic Foundation Year will continue their education at the UA in Aruba; the other half will continue their studies in the Netherlands, with the exception of those that either go to study in the US or have decided to start their working careers because they already have a starting qualification.

The University of Aruba is proud of the students' success and is looking forward to the start of the fourth cohort of the Academic Foundation Year in August 2019. □

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The Aruba Tourism Authority honor loyal visitors at Casa del Mar

EAGLE BEACH—Recently, Darline S. de Cuba had the great pleasure to honor Loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba as Distinguished Visitors at their home away from home. The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between 10-20-35 and more consecutive years.

Russell & Rita Kraus resident of Somerville Mass, were recently honored as Goodwill Ambassadors due to their 20th consecutive visit to Aruba. They stated that they love coming to the island for its beautiful beaches, the great selection of restaurants and the variety of shopping from flea markets to elegance.

De Cuba together with representatives of the Casa Del Mar Beach Resort presented the certificate to the honorees, and handed over some additional presents, thanking them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years. □



SPORTS



Interference or not, NFL refs preparing for replay reviews

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**
AP Sports Writer

PLANO, Texas (AP) — Veteran NFL referee Tony Corrente was quick to make the distinction about what changes now that pass interference can be challenged by coaches and reviewed by officials.

"First of all, the rule has not changed whatsoever. Pass interference is still the same rule that we have had in the past," Corrente said Friday. "We haven't changed our perspective toward it, we haven't changed our interpretations of it whatsoever. It's just the addition of replay." The significant difference, however, is the subjective nature of plays that are typically judgment calls that can now be reviewed, beyond objective standards such as whether a player stepped out of bounds or where the ball should be marked.

"That's the new box we've opened," said Corrente, going into his 25th season as an NFL official and 22nd as a referee.

All 122 NFL officials are taking part this weekend in their annual clinic. The gathering comes about four months after NFL owners approved by a 31-1 margin to allow pass interference or non-calls to be challenged by coaches until the final two minutes, when officials in the booth can then stop the game for such reviews.

Continued on Page 21

ROGER THAT!

Federer tops Nadal, to face Djokovic in final

Switzerland's Roger Federer celebrates after beating Spain's Rafael Nadal in a Men's singles semifinal match on day eleven of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Friday, July 12, 2019.

Associated Press
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Retief Goosen lines up a birdie putt on the 6th hole during the first round of the Bridgestone Senior Players golf tournament, Thursday, July 11, 2019 in Akron, Ohio.

Associated Press

SILVIS, Ill. (AP) — Jhonattan Vegas shot a 9-under 62 on Friday in the John Deere Classic to take a one-stroke lead into the weekend. Off since missing the cuts

Vegas shoots 62, takes 1-shot lead at John Deere Classic

in the Memorial and U.S. Open in June, the three-time PGA tour winner from Venezuela said he "found something really good" on the range Thursday after an opening 67.

"Probably the best I've felt all year, to be honest," Vegas said. "I hit the ball extremely well, kind of what I've been struggling with a little bit the past few months. It felt really good, in control the whole time with the ball-striking, which is my type of game. So I'm glad that stuff is back."

Vegas had a 13-under 129 total at TPC Deere Run.

"It's usually soft, and it's been a little firmer because of the conditions, obviously a little warm," Vegas said. "It's the best I've ever seen it. The greens are perfect. The fairways are rolling more. It's actually a little bit tricky because a lot of the fairways, as undulated as

they are, you have to be a little careful with some of those run-outs."

He last won on the tour in 2017 at the Canadian Open.

Andrew Landry was second after his second 65. He birdied the first three holes on his second nine, then played the next six in 1 over with a bogey on the par-4 sixth hole.

"I've been hitting the ball very, very well all year long," Landry said. "The putter has just kind of been letting me down all year long, and it seems to be working pretty good the last two days."

Lucas Glover had an albatross on the par-5 10th in a 64 that got him to 11 under. He holed out with a 3-iron from 255 yards after a 318-yard drive.

"Honestly, I was trying to hit it over short left, chip up the green, and I pushed it 5, 8 yards, and it bounced and

rolled and I guess it went in. I didn't see it," Glover said. "I was just trying to make birdie, and I got lucky with a 2."

Harold Varner III (65), Russell Henley (68), Daniel Berger (66), Cameron Tringale (66) and Adam Schenk (65) were 10 under. Varner chipped in for eagle from 42 yards on the par-4 14th.

"I hit a really good drive in the rough and it was perfect, and I blasted it and it went too far and smashed the pin and went in," Varner said. "It was awesome." First-round leader Roberto Diaz closed with a double bogey for a 73 that left him at 7 under.

Matthew Wolff, the rookie who won last week in Minnesota, was 4 under after a 71.

Michael Kim, the winner by eight shots last year, missed the cut with rounds of 73 and 72. □

Goosen shoots 62 to take 3-shot lead in Senior Players

AKRON, Ohio (AP) — Retief Goosen shot an 8-under 62 on Friday to take a three-stroke lead in the Bridgestone Senior Players Championship, the fourth of the PGA Tour Champions' five major tournaments.

After returning in the morning to birdie the 18th for a 69 in the rain-delayed first round, Goosen made an 8-foot eagle putt on the par-5 second hole in the second round and added six birdies in the bogey-free round at Firestone Country Club.

"I got it off to a nice flying start on my 18th hole at 7 this morning. I birdied 18 this morning, then went back to the hotel, had an hour and a half sleep again. Came back out and continued the great play after that."

The 50-year-old South African is winless in 11 starts in his first season on the senior tour, losing a playoff to Jerry Kelly last month in the American Family Insurance Championship. Goosen won seven times on the PGA Tour, taking major titles at the U.S. Open in 2001



Retief Goosen lines up a birdie putt on the 6th hole during the first round of the Bridgestone Senior Players golf tournament, Thursday, July 11, 2019 in Akron, Ohio.

and 2004.

Playing partner Steve Stricker, the first-round leader after a 64 that he completed with a birdie in the morning, had a 70 to drop into a tie for second with Brandt Jobe.

"Steve got off to great start

yesterday and you feel like you're falling way behind," Goosen said. "I managed to finish OK this morning only being five behind and suddenly I went on a roll and his game went dead. So it's funny how it works." Stricker is coming off a vic-

tory two weeks ago in the U.S. Senior Open at Norte Dame, and also won the major Regions Tradition in May.

"Never really got anything going at all," Stricker said. "Drove it in the rough quite a few times, missed quite a

few greens, and just when I did hit it on the green, it really wasn't that close to have legitimate birdie putts at it. It's just a good golf course. And if you're a little off off the tee, you pay the price."

Firestone is a longtime PGA Tour venue, hosting the World Golf Championships event and previously the World Series of Golf.

"It's a golf course that I've had some good rounds and I've also had lots of bad rounds," Goosen said. "It's that kind of course. If you're a little bit off your game you could be on the fairway behind a tree. So, it's a course that can get the best of you very quickly and not really playing all that bad."

Jobe shot 69-65.

"It's a hard golf course. No let-up," Jobe said. "I played almost 28 holes. I'm tired. On this golf course, with it being wet and long, it was a long day."

Jay Haas (68), Kent Jones (67) and Tommy Tolles (67) were tied for fourth at 3 under. □

11 years after epic, Federer tops Nadal in Wimbledon semis

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)

— After waiting 11 years to get another shot against Rafael Nadal at Wimbledon, Roger Federer was so, so close to the finish line.

One match point slipped away when Federer missed a forehand return.

A second came and went on a backhand return. Later, serving for a spot in a record 12th final at the All England Club, Federer shanked a leaping overhead off the top edge of his racket frame, giving Nadal a break point. After Nadal wasted that chance, Federer earned two more match points — and failed to convert those, either, as his wife, Mirka, peeked through the fingers covering her face.

Federer knew it wouldn't be easy against his great rival. Never is, really, no matter where they play. Eventually, Nadal pushed a backhand long on match point No. 5, bringing an anticlimactic close to the otherwise classic contest and allowing Federer to win their semifinal 7-6 (3), 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 on Friday.

"I'm exhausted. It was tough at the end," Federer said. "I'm just very relieved it's all over."

Federer closed in on a ninth championship at the All England Club and 21st Grand Slam trophy in all. To get to those numbers in Sunday's final, Federer must get past Novak Djokovic, who is the defending champion and seeded No. 1.

"We all know how good he is anywhere," Djokovic said about Federer, "but especially here."

Djokovic isn't too shabby himself. He reached his sixth final at the grass-court major by beating 23rd-seeded Roberto Bautista Agut 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 earlier Friday. Djokovic is eyeing a fifth championship at Wimbledon and 16th major title.

As entertaining as that first semifinal was — including a 45-stroke point won by Djokovic — it was merely a tasty appetizer ahead of the day's delectable main



Switzerland's Roger Federer, right, greets Spain's Rafael Nadal after beating him in a Men's singles semifinal match on day eleven of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Friday, July 12, 2019.

course.

Not only was this the 40th installment of Federer vs. Nadal, but it also was their first meeting at Wimbledon since the 2008 final. In a match many consider the best in the sport's lengthy annals, Nadal edged Federer 9-7 in a fifth set that ended after 9 p.m., as any trace of daylight disappeared.

How excited, then, were the spectators for the rematch? When Federer and Nadal strode out into the sunshine at 4:30 p.m. Friday, they were welcomed by a standing ovation before ever swinging a racket. Quickly, that greeting was justified. These are, of course, two of the greats of all-time — maybe the two greatest — and they lived up to that status for stretches.

One key, for Federer, was that his rebuilt backhand,

hit strong and flat more frequently than it used to be, held steady against Nadal's bullwhip of a lefty forehand.

Another was that Federer was able to withstand Nadal's serve, which has improved a ton over the years. Federer amassed 10 break points, and though he succeeded on just two, that was enough, with the last, vital conversion making it 2-1 in the fourth set. And then there was this: Federer won 25 of the 33 points when he went to the net.

"I didn't play well enough," said Nadal, who lost a five-set semifinal to Djokovic a year ago at Wimbledon.

There was something of an "Anything you can do, I can do, too" vibe to Friday's proceedings. Federer would kick up chalk with an ace to a corner, and Nadal would do the same in the

next game. When Nadal jumped out to a 3-2 lead in the first-set tiebreaker, Federer used sublime returning to reel off five points in a row to claim it.

Who else but Federer could strike a serve so well that Nadal's wild reply would be caught by someone in the Royal Box behind him, as happened early in the second set?

Who else but Nadal could attack Federer's generally unassailable forehand in such a manner as to draw one so off the mark that it landed in the third row?

"I thought probably the biggest points in the match went my way. There were some tight ones and long rallies," Federer said. "He plays with such velocity and spins and everything, you're not always sure you're going to connect the right way."

No one ever has managed

to reduce Federer to mid-match mediocrity quite the way Nadal can, part of why the Spaniard entered Friday with a 24-15 overall lead head-to-head, including 10-3 at Grand Slam tournaments.

This was the second major in a row where they've faced off: Nadal won their windy French Open semifinal last month en route to his 12th championship on the red clay and 18th Slam overall. But Wimbledon is Federer's dominion:

He's won 101 matches at the place — more than any other man at any other Slam, even Nadal at Roland Garros — and all of those trophies.

Djokovic, meanwhile, leads his series with Federer 25-22, including 9-6 in Grand Slam matches.

"I hope I can push him to the brink and hopefully beat him. But it's going to be very difficult, as we know," Federer said.

"He's not No. 1 just by chance."

On Friday, Djokovic was as animated as ever. When Bautista Agut's shot hit the net tape, popped in the air and slid over for a winner that tied their semifinal at a set apiece, Djokovic motioned to the roaring fans, sarcastically encouraging folks to get louder. When Djokovic ended that 45-stroke point — the longest on record at Wimbledon, where such stats date to 2005 — with a backhand winner, he cupped his ear while glaring into the stands.

"I had," Djokovic said, "to dig deep."

Even Bautista Agut didn't really expect his visit to the All England Club to last this long: The Spaniard was supposed to meet a half-dozen of his buddies on the island of Ibiza this weekend for his bachelor party. Instead, those pals were sitting in a guest box at Centre Court on Friday.

Eventually, Djokovic took control with his enviable ability to return serves, track down balls and go from defense to offense.

Now he's Federer's problem. □

Lynn gets MLB-best 12th win as Rangers beat Astros 5-0



Texas Rangers starting pitcher Lance Lynn works against the Houston Astros during the first inning of a baseball game Thursday, July 11, 2019, in Arlington, Texas.

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
AP Baseball Writer
ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)

— Lance Lynn had more strikes thrown than words used postgame to describe his major league-best 12th victory, one that got the Texas Rangers off to the kind of start their manager had hoped for coming out of the All-Star break. The short answers have become as common for the big right-hander as his impressive outings on the mound.

Lynn matched his season high with 11 strikeouts in seven strong innings and the Rangers beat the AL West-leading Houston Astros 5-0 in the only game Thursday night when Major League Baseball resumed its schedule.

"It was a good game. We scored runs, played good defense. They didn't score any runs, we won," Lynn said in one of his longer responses to five questions in his postgame talk with reporters that lasted about 75 seconds.

Lynn (12-4) won his fifth consecutive start, and is 8-1 over his last 11 starts. He scattered six hits (five singles and a double) and walked two while throwing 75 of 110 pitches for strikes. "He's going to fill the zone up, keep everybody on their toes and try to get them to put the ball in play by throwing strikes," catcher Jeff Mathis said. "That's what we've come to expect of him and he's been doing it lately."

Houston (57-34) still has

a seven-game division lead over Oakland, with the Rangers (49-42) eight games back in third place. Astros lefty Framber Valdez (3-5) didn't make it out of the first inning, when Texas jumped ahead with four runs.

"We've seen this out of him," manager AJ Hinch said. "The good version is really good. And the version that struggles, it's tough for him to manage innings and get out of innings."

Lynn, who signed a \$30 million, three-year free agent deal over the winter after pitching for Minnesota and the New York Yankees last year, is 8-0 in 10 home starts for the Rangers.

"He seems to be throwing harder this year," Astros right fielder Josh Reddick

said. "He's already got such a heavy fastball that gets on you pretty quick. And once you add a little more velo to that, it's going to be a little bit harder task."

Lynn has thrown at least 100 pitches in 10 consecutive starts, the second-longest streak in the majors this season — Washington's Max Scherzer had 12 games in a row with at least 100 pitches until last month.

"That's something that he prides himself," manager Chris Woodward said. "I don't consider him like most pitchers. He's got a lot of old school ... if he were pitching back in the 70s or 80s, he'd probably go 170 pitches. That's just his mentality."

Jose Leclerc and Chris Martin each pitched an inning to wrap up the fourth shutout for the Rangers this season. It was the sixth time

Houston was held scoreless. Texas was up 1-0 before sluggers Nomar Mazara and All-Star outfielder Joey Gallo had strange hits. Mazara had an infield single when the ball spun off his shattered bat at 44 mph and barely got past the mound, then Gallo drove in a run with a double that ricocheted hard off second baseman Jose Altuve and never got out of the infield. Rougned Odor, still hitting .198, made it 4-0 when he drove in two runs with the first of his two doubles. Odor doubled again in the third, and then scored on a single by Jeff Mathis.

TKO TO CHIN

Astros shortstop Alex Bregman left with a lacerated chin after a groundball took a nasty hop and hit the All-Star just below the mouth in the third inning. Bregman was shifted toward the middle of the infield when he went to field a grounder hit by Shin-Soo Choo.

"It sounds like he got four stitches in his chin. He was bleeding when I got out there," Hinch said. "I'm sure it hurt."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Astros: RHPs Brad Peacock and Joe Smith threw in rehab games for Double-A Corpus Christi at nearby Frisco before joining the Astros for their first series after the All-Star break. Both could be activated soon.

Rangers: Hunter Pence, out since June 17 (right groin strain), started a rehab assignment by going 0 for 3 with a walk as the DH for Double-A Frisco. Manager Chris Woodward said Pence, who didn't get to play in the All-Star Game after being voted in as the AL starting DH, would probably have another game at Frisco. □

Analysis: Westbrook, Harden will need to change their games

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Everyone knows that Russell Westbrook and James Harden played together before, which automatically makes their reunion in Houston seem like the right fit.

It won't be that easy. They've both changed since those days. But here they are, together again after the Oklahoma City Thunder decided to trade Westbrook to the Houston Rockets for Chris Paul and another load of draft picks that Sam Presti is collecting in the same way that sneakerheads hoard vintage pairs of Jordans. On the surface, it's a shiny move for Houston — two of the last three NBA MVPs, the two guys with the most points over the last five seasons, in the same backcourt.

Per NBA rules, there will only be one ball in play, however.

The term they use is "ball dominant," a fancy way of saying certain players need the ball in their hands more than others. Westbrook and Harden are two of those guys. Harden held the ball for nearly 6½ seconds — a league high — and took nearly six dribbles, on average, every time he touched it last season. Westbrook typically held the ball for 5.1 seconds, taking nearly five dribbles ev-

ery time it was in his hands. That can't continue. They're both going to have to change.

And getting big-time stars to change is never easy. The Rockets know this, of course, but in a Western Conference that saw Kawhi Leonard and Paul George join the Los Angeles Clippers, Anthony Davis join the Los Angeles Lakers and Kevin Durant leave Golden State, they had to do something. Harden and Paul, for whatever reason, didn't work out. Title-chasing teams like Houston aren't inclined to be patient, so the Rockets took a big swing and brought on Westbrook.

It's believed that this is a trade both Westbrook and Harden wanted. When the Thunder decided to deal George to the Clippers in a move that all but announced that Westbrook would be gone next, it made sense that teaming up with Harden again would be an option.

That makes for a nice story: former teammates getting back together.

These versions of Westbrook and Harden, however, have never been teammates before.

They were kids when they spent the first three seasons of Harden's career together in Oklahoma City. They were making around \$4 million a year, not \$4 million a month. Westbrook was just



In this Jan. 25, 2012 file photo Oklahoma City Thunder guard James Harden, left, talks with teammate Russell Westbrook in the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City. Associated Press

becoming an All-Star, Harden hadn't yet reached that level. And they had Durant on those OKC teams, the last of which was good enough to get to the NBA Finals and get swiftly taken out by Miami in five games. There's no Durant this time to help their cause.

Plus, sure, they spent those three years together in Oklahoma City, but Harden's role was so much different then. He and Westbrook started together in seven games over those three seasons.

Superstar duos are all the rage right now in the NBA,

a basic necessity for any team interested in winning a title. Harden had them before in Houston: It was him and Dwight Howard for a while, him and Paul for the last couple of years — not to mention him, Paul and Carmelo Anthony for 10 games this past season before the Rockets gave up on the 'Melo experiment.

None of them for Harden worked as planned.

This one had better be different, for Houston's sake. Westbrook only gets older and more expensive every year from here, meaning

if this partnership doesn't work it could be difficult for the Rockets to move him and try to create yet another star duo for Harden. This move means the Rockets are all in — championship or bust.

Harden is elite but has no rings yet.

Westbrook is elite but has no rings yet.

They'll be happy now to be together again, they'll be all smiles at media day in September and they will have a super-cool handshake to show off on national television on opening night in October. □

NFL refs

Continued from Page 17

It is an one-season experiment that could very well stick after an egregious missed call in the NFC championship game in January that cost the New Orleans Saints a trip to the Super Bowl.

The NFL competition committee in May decided against making any changes to the new rule approved by owners.

"We understand the play that elevated and got us to where we are today," said Alberto Riveron, the NFL's senior vice president

of officiating. But Riveron stressed that league officials have been discussing the possibility of such reviews for several years, long before the non-call in the closing minutes of regulation after Saints receiver Tommy Lee Lewis was hit by cornerback Nickell Robey-Coleman in a game the Los Angeles Rams went on to win in overtime.

"The competition committee and ownership is constantly looking at ways to get better. We have discussed replay before as it pertains to other situ-

ations. Pass interference, holding, personal fouls," Riveron said. "But we do understand a play of this magnitude elevated us to the point where we are today. But again, it's not new."

Referee Ron Torbert said officials won't change their approach or what they do on the field. He said the change is just an addition to the list of situations that are subject to review by instant replay.

"We'll still do what we've always done, which is try to get every play right," Torbert said.

During the rule's one-year trial this season, coaches still can challenge until the two-minute warning of each half or overtime. A replay official would be responsible for any reviews after that, but would need "clear and obvious visual evidence" to review and overturn potential pass interference in an attempt to avoid too many stoppages.

The replay official will have only the angles on the television broadcast available to overturn an on-field decision. Pass interference still is defined

as an act significantly hindering the opportunity to make a play on a ball, and all pass plays will be subject to review.

When there are such reviews, Torbert and Corrente said referees will be part of a collaborative effort with Riveron and replay officials in New York looking at the plays. The referees can relay why an official called pass interference — or why they didn't throw a flag.

"That collaboration occurs with any reviewable play," Torbert said. "Not just pass interference." □

Hassan breaks women's mile world record; Gatlin wins 100

MONACO (AP) — Sifan Hassan broke the long-standing women's mile record in 4 minutes, 12.33 seconds at the Herculis Diamond League meeting on Friday.

The Dutchwoman fractionally beat the 4:12.56 set in 1996 by Svetlana Masterkova, a two-time Olympic champion that year in Atlanta.

Hassan knocked two seconds off her personal best and finished five seconds clear of Britain's Laura Weightman. It was the first outdoor world record on the track so far this year.

She reached the 1,200-meter mark in 3:10.2 and pushed hard to clock a 62-second closing lap at Stade Louis II, the home of French soccer side Monaco.

Hassan was surprised, but thinks this result stands her in good stead for the world championships in Doha, Qatar, in late September.

"The first 800 was a bit slow, so after that I wasn't thinking it would be a world record," she said. "When I crossed the line I was so surprised. After you run the last 400 like that and set a world record, it gives me (you) much confidence over 5,000 ... I want to double over 1,500 and 5,000 in Doha."

In the men's 100 meters there was another win for world champion Justin Gatlin.

The 37-year-old Gatlin clocked 9.91 seconds to narrowly beat Noah Lyles in 9.92 — Gatlin's winning time last Friday at the Athletissima Diamond League in Lausanne.

Michael Rodgers made it a United States podium sweep with 10.01 for third, having run the same time in Lausanne. "It's all about putting together a good technical race, to use my experience. It feels great to beat these guys," said Gatlin, the 2004 Olympic champion. "This season is surreal; I can't believe I'm still winning here. Noah is a great runner, so every time I race him I'm excited."

In other men's results, Steven Gardiner of the Bahamas won the 400 meters in 44.51 seconds; Nijel Amos of Botswana clinched the 800 in 1:41.89 — the world-leading time this year — and Moroccan runner Soufiane El Bakkali won the 3,000 steeplechase in 8:04.82, another best for the year.

Poland's Piotr Lisek also had a year-leading 6.02 meters in pole vault and Germany's Andreas Hofmann won the javelin throw with 87.84 meters.

"I didn't expect 6.02. It's almost a dream," said Lisek, who also set a personal best. "I've been injury free this year and 100% healthy."

Christian Taylor won the triple jump in 17.82 meters ahead of U.S. countryman Will Claye, 17.75.

The U.S. got another 1-2 in the women's 400 hurdles, with Sydney McLaughlin (53.32 seconds) comfortably beating Ashley Spencer (54.46). Meanwhile, countrywoman Kendra Harrison ran 12.43 to win the women's 100 hurdles ahead of Jamaica's Danielle Williams (12.52) with both having season's bests.

Shaunae Miller-Uibo secured another victory for the Bahamas, this time in the 200 meters, clocking 22.09 seconds to beat Olympic champion Elaine Thompson of Jamaica, 22.44.

Two-time defending world champion Mariya Lasitskene of Russia, competing as a neutral athlete, won the high jump with 2 meters.



Netherlands' Dylan Groenewegen sprints to win the seventh stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 230 kilometers (142.9 miles) with start in Belfort and finish in Chalon sur Saone, France, Friday, July 12, 2019.

Associated Press

Tour de France: Groenewegen sprints to victory in Stage 7

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN

AP Sports Writer

CHALON-SUR-SAONE, France (AP) — Less than a week ago in Brussels, Dylan Groenewegen sat dejected in the middle of a road, his body language oozing disappointment as he was attended by the Tour de France doctor.

One of the fastest sprinters in the world with one of the most powerful teams, the Dutch sprinter was expected to win the opening stage and seize the yellow jersey. Instead, he was caught in a crash and forced to watch his lead out man at Jumbo-Visma, Mike Teunissen, claim all the honors.

To add to his torment, Teunissen and Groenewegen are roommates on the Tour, meaning he had to spend the night with the yellow jersey in his room.

Banged up and demoralized, Groenewegen took a few days to recover, well beaten in the sprints that followed. He finally put his poor Tour start to bed with the tightest of wins in the longest stage on Friday.

"It was not the start I wanted," Groenewegen candidly said after pointing a finger in celebration as he crossed the line. "Over the last days, I focused on today. My team did a really good job. The tactics was to go full gas, and I took the win."

Groenewegen edged Australian rival Caleb Ewan and former world champion Peter Sagan of Slovakia to claim his fourth career stage win of the Tour.

After a final technical hairpin bend, the 230-kilometer stage featured a 1.6-kilometer path to the finish that gave pure sprinters a perfect opportunity to shine. Italian sprinter Elia Viviani was led out by his teammates but lacked speed and dropped out of contention. It was then a tight battle between Groenewegen and Ewan, with the former averaging 74.1 kph to win by just a few centimeters.

Before that intense finale, riders used Stage 7 to recover from the brutal ride on Thursday, and it made for painfully boring viewing.

"A long slow day on the saddle," defending champion Geraint Thomas said. "Everything was starting to ache by the end, your wrists and your feet and stuff."

There was no significant movement in the overall standings. Tour rookie Giulio Ciccone kept the yellow jersey with a six-second lead over Julian Alaphilippe. Among the favorites, Thomas remained the best placed rider, just 49 seconds off the pace. Squeezed between the crossing of the Vosges and Massif Central mountains, the stage took the peloton from Belfort to Chalon-sur-Saone in central-east France. After a day of hardship in the Vosges that culminated with the brutal ascent to the Planches des Belles Filles, the peloton rode at a pedestrian pace and nobody moved in the outskirts of Belfort when breakaway specialists Yoann Offredo and Stephane Rossetto made a move.

Offredo and Rossetto could not make the most of the peloton's apathy. They were reined in about 12 kilometers from the finish.

On the Tour's longest day, some riders were caught napping. Nicolas Roche fell onto his machine on a long section of flat road while American Tejay Van Garderen and Teunissen both hit the tarmac soon after the start, close to a road divider.

Van Garderen was attended by three of his teammates and eventually got back on his bike to finish with a bloodied face and ripped jersey. But he broke a bone in his left hand and his team later announced his withdrawal.

The top American rider in the race, van Garderen was 36th overall, 10 minutes and 26 seconds behind Ciccone.

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Wickens to drive parade lap at Toronto with hand controls

TORONTO (AP) — Robert Wickens has attacked his rehabilitation from a spinal cord injury with aggressive goals. The Canadian wants to dance at his upcoming wedding, one day walk again with zero evidence his legs once did not work and, of course, Wickens hopes to return to racing cars.

Nearly a year after his devastating injury in an IndyCar race, Wickens will get to drive a car again at a track. He will lead the parade lap Sunday before the Toronto IndyCar race in an Acura NSX equipped with hand controls.

"It's just been quite the ride and we are not even one year in of what's going to be a very long recovery," Wickens said Friday. "Hopefully, I can keep on driving because I think that's the best therapy I can have. I am a little bit concerned by how eager I am to get back in the car."

Wickens got a chance Thursday to drive the car — he thanked Honda for trusting him with the \$157,000 Acura — and said he quickly bent a wheel during his laps around Exhibition Place.

"I am notoriously hard on equipment," he laughed. The modifications to the car were made by Arrow, sponsor of the Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports team Wickens drove for last season. In 2014, Arrow developed a Semi-Autonomous Motorcar (SAM) Car that allowed team owner Schmidt, who is paralyzed from the neck down, to get back in a car. For Wickens' drive, Arrow devised a kit that controls the throttle and accelera-



In this March 8, 2019, file photo Robert Wickens sits in the pit area at the IndyCar Grand Prix of St. Petersburg auto race in St. Petersburg, Fla.

tion with a ring on the steering wheel and through software. The brake is a mechanical handbrake with the driver's right hand, there is no clutch and Wickens will shift using paddles on the steering wheel.

He's had roughly two hours behind the wheel of the car that included a shake-down this week at Canadian Tire Motorsports Park. "In my head I've been thinking about this for hours and hours at night while I was in rehab," Wickens said. "I figured out how to throttle on the one side, brake on another side, and it was very important to me that my hands can't leave the steering wheel. So I was always thinking I'd have brake on one side, throttle on the other, and once I got on track, I quickly realized that I need to be able to access the throttle with

both hands and access the brake with both hands." Arrow also has updated the brakes, tires and seatbelts, and Arrow CEO Mike Long said the company is invested in getting Wickens back into a race car on a regular basis.

"I think everybody in the world was wondering is will Robert go fast again?" Long said. "I will tell you I don't think there's any question. We wanted to start this now with Robert so we can be a part of his rehab together with our friends at Honda and get Robby back to racing, because that's what he wants, and we're going to be there to support that effort all the way."

Talks began over the winter between Wickens and Arrow, which has developed technology that assists the driver but does not take

control from the driver — an important distinction between independence over convenience. Arrow's celebrated "SAM" car has given Schmidt the opportunity to drive up Colorado's Pikes Peak, perform an exhibition at Indianapolis Motor Speedway and reach 190 mph on the runway at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, a speed record for a semi-autonomous vehicle. Honda, sponsor for Sunday's race at Toronto, joined the project in March after meeting with Wickens and Arrow at the IndyCar season opening race. It provided the Acura NSX.

"It's just an amazing forward-looking product for a forward-looking platform. It is an electrified vehicle, so it has interesting opportunities, I think, to be responsive as we move forward with some of these next steps,"

Ted Klaus, President of Honda Performance Development, said of the Acura. "I do hope that as Robby really enjoys re-learning how to control the car with his hands, I'm sure he's going to realize he's just using different parts of his brain and his body with this man-machine. It's his desire to get back to the relevant and to grow and challenge himself."

Wickens grew up in Guelph, Ontario, west of Toronto, and this weekend is considered his home race. He finished third last season — one of his five podium finishes in a remarkable rookie season cut short six laps into the 14th race of the year. He was racing at Pocono in Pennsylvania when contact with another car launched Wickens into the fence. He was left paralyzed from the waist down and his injuries included a thoracic spinal fracture, neck fracture, tibia and fibula fractures to both legs, four fractured ribs and a pulmonary contusion.

Most of his rehabilitation is being done in Denver, near Arrow's Colorado headquarters, but he has been able to travel more and attend IndyCar races as a consultant to the team.

He will be accompanied on his parade lap by fiancée Karli Woods, who will be in the passenger seat in front of their hometown crowd.

"Obviously, being in front a hometown crowd, with friends and family around, it makes it even more special," Wickens said. "In the winter when we first started planning this, the goal was always to have everything ready for Toronto." □

Porzingis officially re-signed by Mavs without playing game

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Mavericks have officially re-signed Kristaps Porzingis, the 7-foot-3 All-Star selection who still hasn't played a game for them since being acquired in a big deal before the trade deadline last season.

The Mavericks announced Friday that the deal was

done.

Porzingis and the Mavericks agreed earlier this month on a \$158 million, five-year maximum contract — the last season being a player option. That will pair the Latvian stand-out with fellow young Euro star Luka Doncic, the 20-year-old from Slovenia

who was the NBA's Rookie of the Year last season when he averaged 21.2 points.

Dallas sent a pair of first-round picks and Dennis Smith Jr., the ninth overall selection in the 2017 draft, to the New York Knicks for Porzingis in a seven-player trade last Jan. 31.

Porzingis, who turns 24 on Aug. 2, sat out all of last season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee on Feb. 6, 2018, in what turned out to be his last game for the Knicks. The injury happened not long after Porzingis was named an All-Star.

In 186 games over three seasons with the Knicks after being the fourth overall pick in the 2015 draft, Porzingis averaged 17.8 points and 7.1 rebounds. He averaged 22.7 points through 48 games in 2017-18 before the injury that has since kept him out of NBA games. □



In this June 19, 2017, file photo President Donald Trump, left, and Satya Nadella, Chief Executive Officer of Microsoft, center, listen as Jeff Bezos, Chief Executive Officer of Amazon, speaks during an American Technology Council roundtable in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

Judge sides with Pentagon and Amazon in cloud bidding case

By MATT O'BRIEN
AP Technology Writer

A federal judge has dismissed allegations that bidding for a \$10 billion cloud computing contract with the Pentagon was rigged to favor Amazon.

Friday's ruling dismissing Oracle's claims clears the Defense Department to award the contract to one of two finalists: Amazon or Microsoft.

It will be a boon for whichever company gets to run the 10-year computing project, which the U.S. military considers vital to maintaining its technological advantage over adversaries and accelerating its use of artificial intelligence in warfare.

Oracle and IBM were eliminated during an earlier round, but Oracle persisted with a legal challenge claiming conflicts of interest.

Court of Federal Claims Judge Eric Bruggink said Friday that Oracle can't demonstrate favoritism because it didn't meet the project's bidding requirements to begin with. Bruggink also sided with a Pentagon contracting officer's earlier finding that there were no "organizational conflicts of interest" and no individual conflicts that harmed the bidding.

The Pentagon has said it wants to pick a vendor as soon as Aug. 23.

Formally called the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure plan, or JEDI, the military's computing project would store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the Pentagon to use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities.

Amazon was considered an early favorite when the Pentagon began detailing its cloud needs in 2017, but rivals accused Amazon executives and the Pentagon of being overly cozy.

Oracle had its final chance to make its case against Amazon — and the integrity of the government's bidding process — in oral arguments Wednesday. The judge ruled two days later. Oracle spokeswoman Deborah Hellinger didn't address the ruling in a statement Friday but said the company looks forward to working with the Defense Department and other agencies in the future because Oracle's cloud products offer "significant performance and security capabilities" over competitors. Some members of Congress have expressed concerns about reports of potential favoritism toward

Amazon. In an emailed statement earlier this week, Sen. Chuck Grassley, an Iowa Republican, said the Pentagon should start the bidding process over and rewrite its proposal.

"The Defense Department should, at the very least, hold off on awarding the contract until the inspector general has had a chance to conduct a thorough investigation and report on their findings," Grassley said.

Along with conflict concerns, criticism of the project has centered on the Pentagon's decision to award the entire 10-year contract to one vendor, tasking a single private company with storing and securing so much secret data.

Murli Thirumale, CEO of cloud computing startup Portvox, said a decade is a "lifetime" in technology, and relying on one vendor for that long could limit innovation.

"To make a 10-year bet is way too problematic," said Thirumale, who said his company is a sales partner with IBM, Amazon and Microsoft but doesn't have direct financial interests in the deal.

"You may not have access to the best and brightest technologies." □



In this Oct. 9, 2018, file photo a Google Home Hub is displayed in New York.

Associated Press

Human workers can listen to Google Assistant recordings

BY RACHEL LERMAN
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google contractors regularly listen to and review some recordings of what people say to artificial-intelligence system Google Assistant, via their phone or through smart speakers such as the Google Home.

The company acknowledged that humans can access those recordings after some of its Dutch language audio snippets were leaked. Google product manager David Monsees acknowledged the leak in a blog post Thursday, and said the company is investigating the breach.

"We are conducting a full review of our safeguards in this space to prevent misconduct like this from happening again," he wrote.

More than 1,000 recordings were obtained by Belgian broadcaster VRT NWS, which noted in a story that some contained sensitive personal conversations — as well as information that identified the person speaking. Google says no user account information is associated with the recordings, and reviewers are instructed not to transcribe background conversations.

But VRT reporters could hear spoken home addresses in some of the recordings, and were able to track down the speakers. Some of these conversations were not directed at Assistant and happened either as background noise or as a mistaken recording when Assistant thought it was being spoken to, but wasn't.

Google says contractors listen to recordings to better understand language patterns and accents. Its user terms confirm recordings may be used by the company, stating Assistant "records your voice and audio on Google services to improve speech recognition."

Monsees wrote that Google works with contractors around the world to analyze the recordings.

"These language experts review and transcribe a small set of queries to help us better understand those languages," he wrote.

Google's terms don't explicitly say that people review the recordings, but do state that data could be analyzed as the company updates services or create new features.

The company acknowledged earlier this year that its reviewers listen to anonymous recordings in response to a Bloomberg report revealing that Amazon's Alexa also uses contractors to listen to recordings. Amazon confirmed the report.

Google's recording feature can be turned off, but doing so means Assistant loses some of its personalized touch. People who turn off the recording feature lose the ability for the Assistant to recognize individual voices and learn your voice pattern. □

How your 2019 vacation can pay for your 2020 vacation

By **JUNE CASAGRANDE**
NerdWallet

Associated Press

If you're gearing up for summer vacation, you might be wincing at the cost. Plane tickets, hotels, rental cars, meals and activities can turn any getaway into a financial burden. But what if this year's vacation could pay for next year's, or at least cover a good chunk of it?

Thanks to points and miles, it's possible, especially if you're willing to pledge your loyalty to one or two brands.

PICK A HOTEL GROUP

The goal here is to be able to pay for next year's hotel with points you earn this year. The first step? Reserve your 2019 hotel in the same family of hotels you'll stay with in 2020, and sign up for that chain's loyalty program.

Look at hotels in the place where you'll spend your upcoming vacation, note a few you like, then search hotels in the place where you expect to vacation next year. Most will be part of the Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, IHG, Wyndham, Best Western, Radisson or Choice Hotels chains. Now pick a 2019 favorite and a 2020 favorite within the same family.

PICK AN AIRLINE

The same philosophy applies to your airline: Fly this year and earn points toward next year's trip. This can be trickier, though, as a carrier with great fares



In this July 2, 2019, file photo a surfer walks out of the water after riding waves at dusk at Scripps Beach in San Diego.

to your 2019 vacation spot may not be competitive to your 2020 destination — or even an option. And fares frequently change.

Just make your best educated guess. Search for tickets for this year's destination and next year's to see which airlines have the most competitive fares right now. Sign up for that airline's frequent flyer program.

APPLY FOR TWO CREDIT CARDS WITH BIG SIGN-UP BONUSES

This is where you'll earn the bulk of points to redeem next year. Credit card sign-up bonuses offer you tens of thousands of hotel points or airline miles after you're approved and meet a minimum spending require-

ment.

Check the latest credit card offerings for your chosen hotel group and airline, then apply for the ones that best suit you. These cards often come with perks that make travel easier, such as free checked bags or late-checkout privileges.

But proceed with caution: Earning that big bonus typically requires you to spend a minimum of \$2,000 to \$5,000 on the card in the first three months. Be sure you can meet that requirement, while paying off your balance in full each month to avoid interest charges. And be aware of cards' annual fees, which can eat into the value of the bonus. If necessary, stagger your credit card applications so

Associated Press

you can focus on using one card for three months, then the next card for the following three months, even if it means you can't use one of them on this year's trip. And be sure both cards you apply for are ones you can keep and use regularly, as opening and closing accounts can have an effect on your credit scores.

BOOK YOUR 2019 TRIP WITH YOUR NEW CARDS

Travel credit cards can boost your points-earning potential with your chosen airline or hotel group. For example, members of Hilton's Honors program earn 10 points for every dollar spent on a qualifying hotel stay, but booking with a Hilton card can earn an additional 7, 12 or even 14

points per dollar. The same dynamic applies for airline loyalty programs: You earn miles just for flying, but you can increase those miles substantially by paying for your flight with an airline-branded card. One thing to balance: Airfare tends to spike within two weeks of travel dates, so if this summer's trip is fast approaching, you might need to book flights before you secure a new card.

BE STRATEGIC IN EVERYDAY SPENDING

Routine spending can help pay for next year's vacation, too, because travel rewards credit cards generally pay at least 1 point per dollar on anything you buy. Some cards give you a points boost in certain spending categories, like restaurants and gas stations. Other opportunities include:

- Using your airline or hotel's virtual mall, a web portal where you earn bonus points by shopping at hundreds of big-name retailers.
- Signing up for an airline or hotel's dining rewards program, to enhance your earning potential when you dine out.

If you don't like the idea of a hotel- or airline-branded credit card, you can devise a similar strategy using general travel rewards or even cash-back credit cards. The goal is to maximize the rewards you earn in 2019 so you'll have points to spend in 2020. □

China imports from US plunge 31% in June amid tariff war

By **JOE McDONALD**

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's imports from the United States plunged in June amid a tariff war with Washington while exports to the U.S. market weakened. Imports of U.S. goods fell 31.4% from a year earlier to \$9.4 billion, while exports to the American market declined 7.8% to \$39.3 billion, customs data showed Friday. China's trade surplus with the United States widened by 3% to \$29.9 billion.

U.S.-Chinese trade has weakened since President Donald Trump started hiked tariffs last year on goods from China in a fight over Beijing's technology ambitions. China retaliated with penalty duties and ordered importers to find non-U.S. suppliers.

Trump and his Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed in June to resume negotiations. That

helped to reassure jittery financial markets but forecasters say their truce is fragile because the two sides are divided by the same array of conflicts that caused talks to break down in May. Trade envoys talked by phone Tuesday in their first contact since Trump and Xi met in Japan, the Chinese Commerce Ministry said. It gave no details or a date for more contacts. Trade weakness has added to pressure on Xi's government to shore up economic growth and avoid politically dangerous job losses. Washington is pressing Beijing to roll back plans for government-led creation of Chinese global competitors in robotics, electric cars and other technologies. The United States also wants other changes including cuts in subsidies to Chinese industry. Chinese leaders express confidence their economy can survive the tariff fight. But while



In this Tuesday, May 14, 2019, photo, containers are piled up at a port in Qingdao in east China's Shandong province.

Associated Press

American exporters have been hit hardest, Chinese industries including electronics that Beijing sees its economic future have suffered double-digit declines in sales to the United States, their biggest market. □

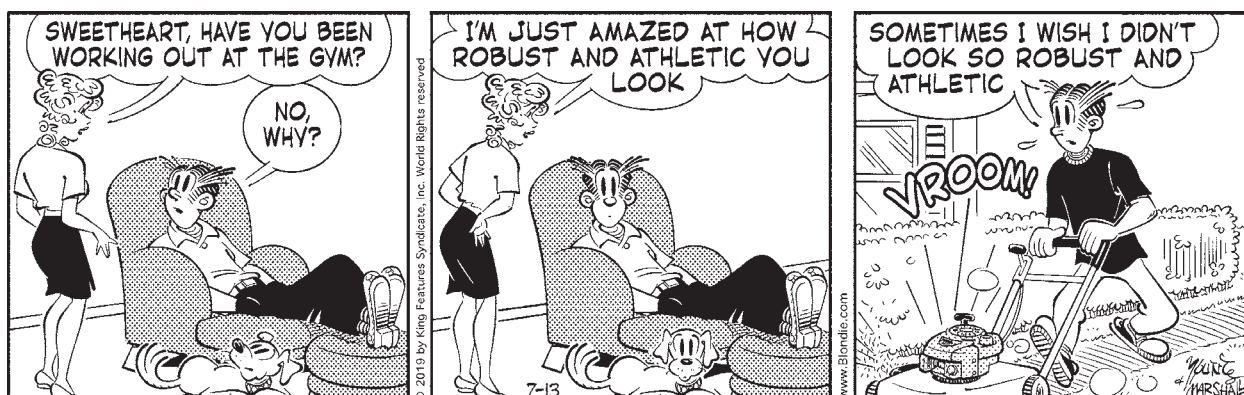
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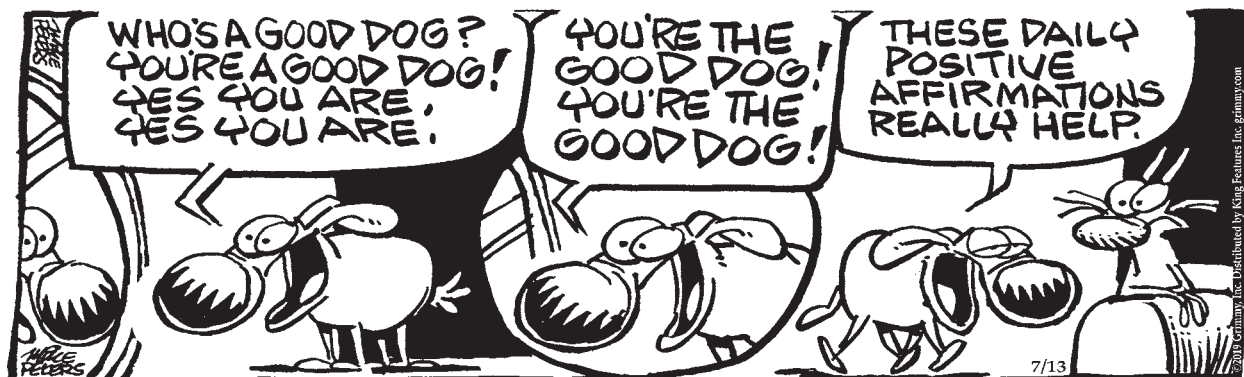
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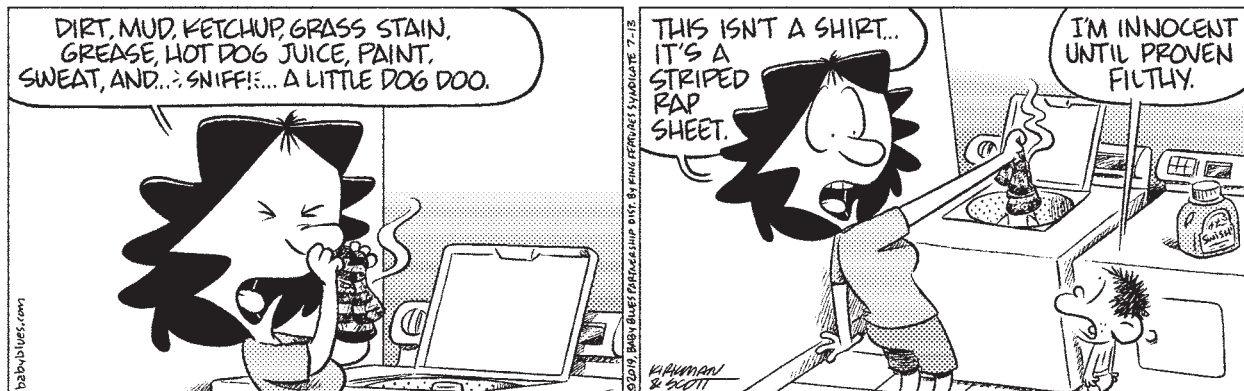
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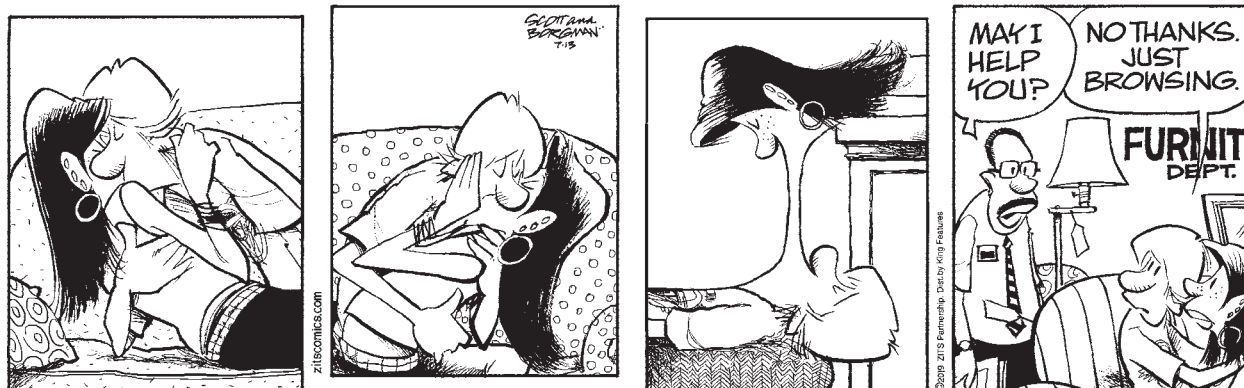
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

4		9						7
			3		4			
				6				5
	2		1		5		9	
		3				7		
	1		8		2		4	
7				2				
			6		7			
8						9		3

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

7/13

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

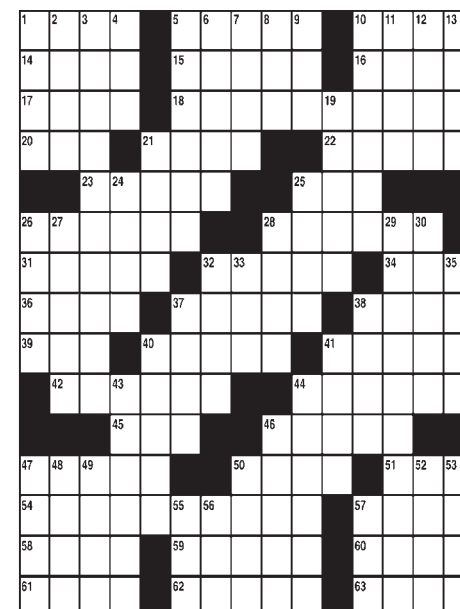
4	8	5	6	2	7	9	3	1
2	7	6	1	3	9	4	8	5
9	1	3	8	5	4	2	6	7
3	4	2	7	8	1	6	5	9
8	5	9	4	6	3	7	1	2
7	6	1	5	9	2	8	4	3
5	2	8	9	1	6	3	7	4
1	9	7	3	4	8	5	2	6
6	3	4	2	7	5	1	9	8

ACROSS

- Give a hoot
- Begin
- Mama's mate
- Fibbed
- Portable home
- Mar
- Weapons
- Analyzed again
- Telepathy, e.g.
- Cause of bad luck
- Nervous
- Breakfast table recesses
- __-tac-toe
- Painkiller
- Actor James __
- Ship poles
- Shopper's binge
- Hippie's home
- Symptom of athlete's foot
- __ in; join a conversation
- San __; Costa Rica's capital
- Even score
- Daft
- Rudely brief
- Most unusual
- One who dies for his beliefs
- Traitor
- Toils
- Comic __; "Peanuts," e.g.
- Market
- Buddy
- Small radio
- Run fast
- Pig's comment
- Razz
- E's followers
- Cookware items
- Wise men
- Islets off Florida

DOWN

- Sound of thunder
- Haughtiness
- Thought about the past
- McMahon & Begley
- Bowler's delight
- Adolescents
- Pinnacle
- Reed or Harrison
- British custom
- William or Harry
- Female relation
- Bakery display
- Mayberry resident
- "The Pine Tree State"
- __ down; makes a note of
- Sworn statement
- Ash or alder
- Leave out
- __ furniture; chaise lounges, etc.
- Military force
- Where to find scores
- Impudent
- Injection
- Clothing fastener
- Graceful animal
- Expense
- Slimeball
- Jumps



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

7/13/19

Friday's Puzzle Solved

SNUG	SLAP	ECHO
HONER	COMO	SHOW
UNITE	AGITATION	
NEV	VAN	SLANTS
EDICT	HOT	
CAROLE	COHEIR	
AIISLE	THETA	MOP
BRIE	POOLS	SPUR
SET	FIDEL	PHOTO
DYNAMO	PAIRED	
ALI	TAUNT	
SPOUSE	ADS	ALL
CONGENIAL	ERNIE	
ARCH	TOFU	DUCKS
MEET	OUTS	BEEES

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7/13/19

- Waterproof covering
- Beverages
- Demi or Dudley
- TV's "___ Line Is It Anyway?"
- Word in a red octagon
- Threesome
- Angry speech
- Male animal
- Sore
- Garlands
- "Don't judge a book by ___ cover"
- Red or Dead
- JFK's Attorney General

Sea dragons captivate visitors at California aquarium

By JULIE WATSON
Associated Press

LA JOLLA, California (AP) —

At first glance, it looks like a branch of kelp, but then an eye moves among its leafy appendages, and ridges of tiny, translucent fins start to flutter, sending the creature gliding through the water like something from a fairy tale.

A Southern California aquarium has built what is believed to be one of the world's largest habitats for the surreal sea dragons, whose native populations off Australia are threatened by pollution, warming oceans and the illegal pet and alternative medicine trades.

The Birch Aquarium at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego hopes the exhibit, which opened this month, will lead to the leafy sea dragon, the lesser-known cousin of the seahorse, being bred for the first time in captivity.

"It literally just looked like a piece of kelp," said Steven Kowal, 25, who was visiting San Diego from Greensboro, North Carolina, and took time to see the exhibit. "It was crazy to me that it was, like, actually living and swimming around, so that's cool. I've never seen anything like that."

That's a common reaction. "They look like something out of this world," said Leslee Matsushige, the aquarium's associate curator, who noted the sea dragons' amazing ability to camouflage themselves. "When people see them move, you hear them say, 'What? That's alive? Wow! That's crazy.'"

Scientists like Matsushige hope the creatures' magnetic power will prompt people to read signs next to the tanks that outline ways to protect them and what can be done to make oceans healthier, such as picking up trash and stopping pollutants from going down the drain.

Few aquariums have sea dragons.

There are only two types of sea dragons, the leafy and



In this Friday, May 17, 2019 photo, a sea dragon swims at the Birch Aquarium at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego in San Diego.

Associated Press

the weedy, each representing its own genus. Both are found only in a small area of temperate waters off the southern and western coasts of Australia.

Little is known about them because their populations are so small and in remote areas.

So far, only the weedy sea dragon, a bony fish that resembles seaweed when floating, has been bred in captivity, and only a handful of times.

The Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach was the first in the world to breed the weedy sea dragons in 2001. It also is trying to breed leafy sea dragons.

The Birch Aquarium's 18-foot-long (5.5-meter-long) tank has three leafy sea dragons — two males

and one female — and 11 weedy sea dragons. The 5,300-gallon (20,062-liter) tank is a vast space, especially for the smaller leafy sea dragon, which grows to only about 14 inches (36 centimeters) in length.

The tank has grassy plants, a sandy bottom and rocks. Scientists hope the large space will foster breeding. Sea dragons mirror each other in a courtship dance, spiraling upward before the female deposits her eggs onto a patch on the underside of the male's tail. Like seahorses, the male carries the young and gives birth.

"We're already seeing great courtship behaviors, and so we're hopeful we can get some egg transfers really soon," said Jenn Nero

Moffatt, director of animal care at the Birch Aquarium.

The exhibit is the latest effort by the aquarium that is a world leader in seahorse propagation.

Sea dragons swim by spinning translucent fins while their tails act as rudders. They have no natural predators, in part because their slender bodies are covered by bony plates.

If both types of sea dragons can be bred, scientists believe that could reduce the number being taken illegally from the wild. □



Editor

Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
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Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editor in Chief

Linda Reijnders

(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)

Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Editors

Richard Brooks

Jeancarlo Trinidad

Sales

Linda Reijnders

(linda.reijnders@cspnv.com)

Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Cristian Soto Garcia

Pilar Flores

Juan Luis Pinto

Columnists

Anthony Croes

Joris Zantvoort

Shanella Pantophlet

Steve Francees

Thais Franken

Weststraat 22

T: 582-7800

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EPA restores broad use of pesticide opposed by beekeepers

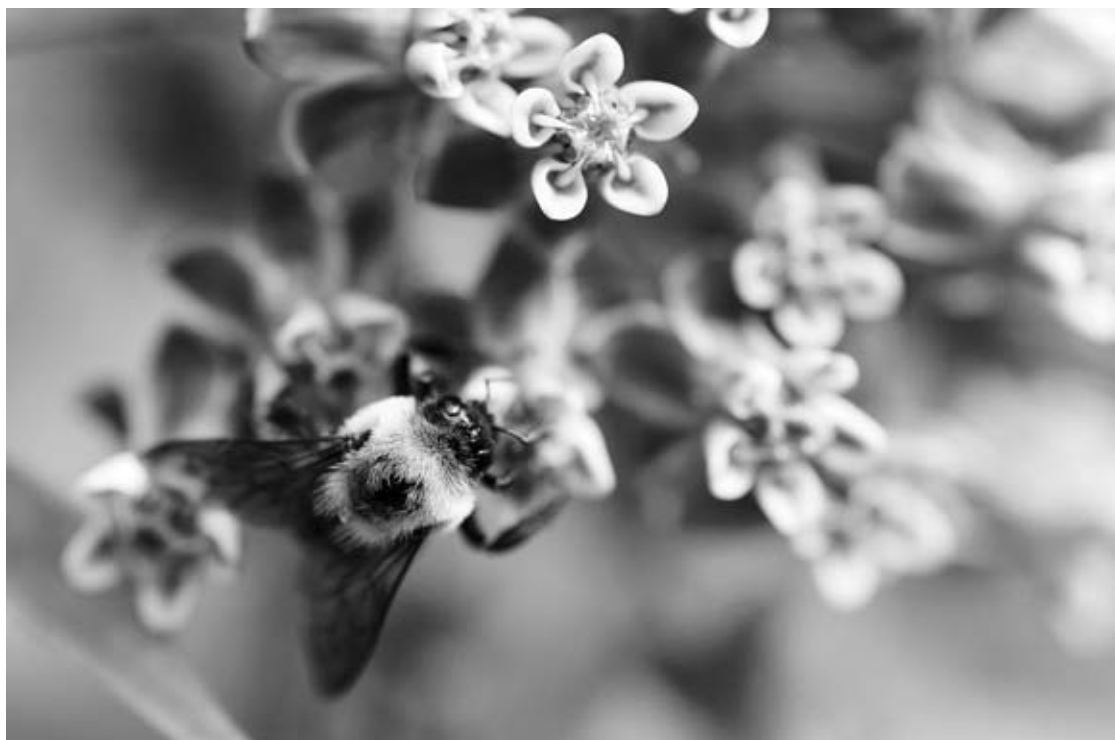
By ELLEN KNICKMEYER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency will allow farmers to resume broad use of a pesticide over objections from beekeepers, citing private chemical industry studies that the agency says show the product does only low-level harm to bees and wildlife.

Friday's EPA announcement — coming after the agriculture industry accused the agency of unduly favoring honeybees — makes sulfoxaflor the latest bug- and weed-killer allowed by the Trump administration despite lawsuits alleging environmental or human harm. The pesticide is made by Corteva Agriscience, a spinoff created last month out of the DowDuPont merger and restructuring.

Honeybees pollinate billions of dollars of food crops annually in the United States, but agriculture and other land uses that cut into their supply of pollen, as well as pesticides, parasites and other threats, have them on a sharp decline. The University of Maryland said U.S. beekeepers lost 38 percent of their bee colonies last winter alone, the highest one-winter loss in the 13-year history of their survey. Emails and other records



In this June 5, 2019, photo, a bee pollinates a milkweed flower at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md.

obtained from the EPA through Freedom of Information Act litigation by the Sierra Club, and provided to The Associated Press, show sorghum growers in particular had pressed senior officials at the agency for a return to broad use of sulfoxaflor.

Sorghum growers regard honeybees as just another "non-native livestock" in the United States, lobbyist Joe Bischoff said in one 2017 email to agency officials, and by cutting threats to the bees, "EPA has chosen that form of agriculture

over all others." A federal appeals court had ordered the EPA to withdraw approval for sulfoxaflor in 2015, ruling in a lawsuit brought by U.S. beekeeping groups that not enough was known about what it did to bees.

EPA Assistant Administrator Alexandra Dapolito Dunn said Friday that new industry studies that have not been made public show a low level of harm to bees and other creatures beyond the targeted crop pests.

Dunn said EPA's newly reset

rules for use of sulfoxaflor, such as generally prohibiting spraying of fruit and nut-bearing plants in bloom, when pollinators would be attracted to the flowers, would limit harm to bees. She called it "an important and highly effective tool for growers."

Michele Colopy, program director of the Pollinator Stewardship Council, one of the beekeeping groups that had successfully sued to block sulfoxaflor, said the EPA limits weren't enough to protect bees and other beneficial bugs whose

numbers are declining. "We understand farmers want to have every tool in their toolbox," when it comes to curbing insects that damage crops. "But the ... pesticides are just decimating beneficial insects," Colopy said. An environmental group charged the EPA with sidestepping the usual public review in reapproving broader use of the pesticide.

"The Trump EPA's reckless approval... without any public process is a terrible blow to imperiled pollinators," said Lori Ann Burd, director of the Center for Biological Diversity's environmental health program. Separately, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced without fanfare on July 1 that it would stop collecting quarterly data on honeybee colonies, citing budget restrictions. Beekeepers and others used the data to track losses and growth in U.S. honeybee colonies.

Other Trump administration decisions have upheld market use of the weed-killing glyphosate, which is now the target of thousands of consumer lawsuits over alleged harm to people exposed to it, and shelved an Obama-era decision to ban the pesticide chlorpyrifos as a threat to human health. □

Former astronaut helps break flight record over poles

By MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

(AP) — A former astronaut landed back at NASA's Kennedy Space Center on Thursday after helping to shatter a pair of records for a round-the-world airplane flight over the North and South poles. Terry Virts was part of the team whose

46-hour, 39-minute and 38-second polar circumnavigation flight ended where it began. They set the duration and speed records in a Qatar Executive Gulfstream G650ER aircraft. Their average speed was 535 mph (861 kph). Dubbed "One More Orbit," the flight paid homage to next week's 50th anni-



In this Thursday, July 11, 2019 photo provided by Chris Garrison, Col. Terry Virts, former International Space Station commander, center with sunglasses, and British pilot Captain Hamish Harding, third from right, pose with other crew members in front of their Gulfstream aircraft after their record-breaking around-the-world flight over the North and South poles, landing at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Associated Press

versary of humanity's first moon landing. Virts' former space station crewmate, Russian Gennady Padalka, was on the first two legs of the flight. Padalka, the world's space champ with 879 days in orbit, left during a fueling stop. Virts said in a tweet that the three stops were "NASCAR pit-stop intense." Each stop lasted less than an hour. The plane departed from the former landing strip Tuesday at 9:32 a.m. — the same liftoff time as Apollo 11's Saturn V rocket on July 16, 1969. It crossed over the North Pole, stopped in Kazakhstan and then Mauritius, crossed above the South Pole, stopped in Chile, and then returned to Florida. □

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California exhibit paints Ed Hardy as artist, tattoo pioneer

By S. MALDONADO

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

When people hear the name Ed Hardy, they likely think of the flashy, tiger- and skull-emblazoned clothing that rocketed to popularity in the 2000s, appearing on the likes of Paris Hilton, Britney Spears and cast members from the reality TV show "Jersey Shore." Others recognize Hardy as a trailblazing tattooer whose unique designs were licensed for use on apparel and merchandise, and whose legacy transcends the brand's current notoriety.

But few know him as a prolific fine artist.

"The clothing was one little blip on his whole career, which was staggering," said Mary Joy Scott, a tattoo artist who apprenticed under Hardy and works at the San Francisco shop he founded, Tattoo City.

Five miles (8 kilometers) southwest of Tattoo City, a lively exhibition opening Friday at the de Young Museum sheds light on Hardy as wide-ranging artist and tattoo pioneer. Through 300 paintings, prints, drawings and objects, "Ed Hardy: Deeper than Skin" is the first retrospective of his work and shows how Hardy intertwined fine art with tattooing to push both forward.

"Ed Hardy's mission (was) to elevate the tattoo form from its subculture status back in the 1960s at least to a level of a folk art. I think



In this Wednesday, July 10, 2019 photo, boogie boards designed by Ed Hardy are displayed during a media preview of "Ed Hardy: Deeper than Skin" at the de Young Museum in San Francisco.

Associated Press

he surpassed that," said curator Karin Breuer. "Here it is in museum culture."

The exhibition, which follows Hardy's donation of 152 prints to the museum, bursts with color as it tracks the 74-year-old artist's evolution.

It features crayon drawings of sample tattoos Hardy made as a 10-year-old, when he set up a tattoo shop for friends in his Southern California neighborhood of Corona del Mar. Prints from his college days at the San Francisco Art Institute are displayed alongside lithographs and etchings by the likes of Rodolphe Bresdin and Gordon Cooke, who inspired Hardy. "I'm part of a continuum," Hardy said of his art idols.

"There's a lot more to my life than tattooing."

One of the first pieces in "Deeper than Skin" is a 1967 print entitled "Future Plans," in which a then-undergraduate Hardy, with only a few tattoos, portrays himself as fully inked.

The exhibition comes full circle with its final image, a blown-up 2009 photo of a bare-chested, tattoo-covered Hardy, now a full-fledged artist retired from tattooing thanks to the financial windfall of the clothing brand.

Visitors can get a projected animation of a Hardy tattoo design "applied" to their skin. They can also walk along a snaking, 2,000-square-foot (186-square-meter) scroll

suspended from the ceiling on which Hardy painted 2,000 dragons in the year 2000.

"Ed Hardy is the only tattooer in the Western world who could merit a show of this kind," said Matt Lodder, a University of Essex professor who studies the history of tattoo as art. "Tattooers of a particular mode are all working, whether they know it or not, in a kind of pattern Ed Hardy was the first to lay down."

When Hardy began tattooing in 1967 after abandoning plans to attend Yale art school, he was one of the few American tattoo artists with a fine arts background. Hardy was also the first Western tattoo artist to study traditional Japanese

tattooing abroad. When he returned stateside, Hardy blended those techniques with the American sailor and military tattoo types to develop his signature style: colorful hearts, clouds, dragons, daggers, roses and ribbons with bold, black outlines.

In 1974, Hardy moved away from offering pre-designed "flash" tattoos toward made-to-order work, an approach that's now the norm. Before Hardy, no other tattoo shop operated that way. The exhibition displays Hardy's custom pencil sketches and watercolors beneath photographs of the works inked on human bodies.

"It's rather shocking to some people that we can jump from an exhibition of Monet paintings to an exhibition of a tattoo artist," Breuer said. The de Young offers discounts for tattooed visitors in an attempt to attract a wider demographic. The retrospective, which runs through Oct. 6, marks changing sensibilities in the art world as museums embrace tattoo as fine art.

An overlapping exhibition at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum showcases tattoos in Japanese prints.

"It's a terrific affirmation, not only for myself, but for a lot of the old bandits and pirates that helped me in the business," Hardy said. "They operated outside polite society, outside of the structure that controls what people think of as art." □

'Last Witnesses' offers children's memories of WWII

By DOUGLASS K. DANIEL

Associated Press

"Last Witnesses: An Oral History of the Children of World War II," by Svetlana Alexievich (Random House)

Does anyone suffer more in wartime than a child? All they know is at risk — parents, siblings, neighbors, homes, schools, even pets. All too soon they learn of hunger, death and inhumanity. Those who survive carry scars on their flesh and their minds — and they have stories to tell, if they can bear it.

"I want to forget," says Liuba

Alexandrovich, who was just 11 when she watched German soldiers shoot every third person in her tiny Soviet village, a reprisal for providing support to partisans opposing Hitler's forces after their 1941 invasion. Later the soldiers gathered those whose children had joined the partisans and beheaded them. She says, "I want to forget it all."

Belarusian writer and journalist Svetlana Alexievich believes such moments must be remembered and gives scores of Soviets an opportunity to tell their sto-

ries.

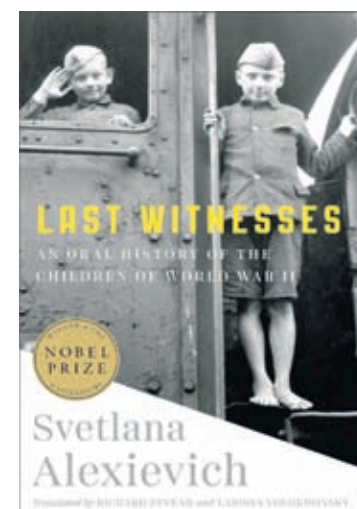
Her engrossing book "Last Witnesses" first appeared in 1985, but its English translation is new, the third of Alexievich's books to come from Random House since she won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2015.

Readers of the late American writer Studs Terkel, the most celebrated oral historian in the U.S., will recognize the simple but powerful prose that comes from recording ordinary people's memories.

More than 100 people speak in "Last Witnesses"

and many recall similar horrors — planes and falling bombs interrupting playtime, soldiers burning villages and their inhabitants, people fleeing into forests, children burying parents in frigid ground, young ones eating grass or garbage or the family cat to survive.

There are hopeful stories, too, serving as streaks of light in the darkness. Some people recall acts of kindness, such as a single woman telling two young orphans wandering the countryside, "You'll be my children now." □



This cover image released by Random House shows "Last Witnesses: An Oral History of the Children of World War II," by Svetlana Alexievich.

Associated Press

'Game of Thrones,' 'Veep' make final grabs for Emmy glory

By LYNN ELBER
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When a long-running, much-admired television series ends, Emmy voters can bring the show and its stars back for a final bow — or give them the bum's rush.

"Game of Thrones," "Veep" and "The Big Bang Theory," three major series that wrapped last season, will find out with Tuesday's nominations if they get an-

other shot at Emmy gold or have been overshadowed by shiny new rivals such as "Pose" and "Fleabag."

HBO's gore-and-dragons fantasy saga and its Washington satire "Veep" look well-positioned to garner top series and cast nominations, even though some fans and critics dinged (OK, savaged) "Game of Thrones" for an uneven season.

The 71st Emmy Awards



This image released by HBO shows Julia Louis-Dreyfus in a scene from "Veep."

Associated Press

show airs Sept. 22 on Fox.

It promises to be "the last hurrah of the Emmy giants," Tom O'Neil, author of "The Emmys" and editor of the Gold Derby awards handicapping website, said of the premium cable series. "In all likelihood, they'll get their farewell hug, because we know that the Emmys are a lot like TV reruns: they repeat," he said.

Also worth noting: how TV academy voters follow up on last year's banner number of nominations for people of color that notably yielded few awards, and none for drama and comedy series acting awards.

In Tuesday's horse race, HBO is looking to rebound as the most-nominated outlet, bragging rights it lost after a 17-year record was snapped last year by relative upstart Netflix (with 112 bids to HBO's 108). The streaming service that's making a multibillion-dollar investment in programming has something to prove as well. So far it has fallen short of competitors Hulu and Amazon's top series trophies for, respectively, "The Handmaid's Tale" and "The Amazing Mrs. Maisel." "Game of Thrones" and "Veep" are fierce competitors, with each winning the last three times they were in contention. "Game of Thrones" is poised to reap

nods for stars including Peter Dinklage, the only cast member to win an Emmy (make that three), and Emilia Clarke. After several supporting actress nods for her portrayal of ill-fated Daenerys Targaryen, Clarke is seeking best-actress honors.

There is competition afoot for "Game of Thrones" in the drama series category from "Pose," set in 1980s New York and the ball culture world, and "Killing Eve" with Sandra Oh. Last year, Oh became the first person of Asian ancestry to snare an Emmy nod for best drama series actress.

The comedy races look especially tight. "Veep" sat out 2018 because of a production delay while star Julia Louis-Dreyfus was treated for breast cancer. "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" took streaming's first best comedy trophy and its star, Rachel Brosnahan, won best comedy acting honors. Brosnahan and Louis-Dreyfus are likely contenders this year. The latter has collected six trophies for her "Veep" role as ex-President Selina Meyer and, with her Emmys for "Seinfeld" and "New Adventures of Old Christine," is tied with Cloris Leachman at eight for the most-winning performer ever.

Those seeking to invade her turf include Phoebe Waller-Bridge for "Fleabag" and Natasha Lyonne for "Russian Doll," while "Veep" itself could be challenged by their shows and Golden Globe-winning "Barry," starring Bill Hader.

CBS' "The Big Bang Theory," which ended its 12-season run in May, has gradually receded from Emmy attention, last earning a best comedy series bid in 2014. That was also the last year that star and Emmy favorite Jim Parsons captured a trophy for best comedy actor, his fourth for the show.

There's a "decent chance" that Parsons could be nominated once more, O'Neil said.

If "The Big Bang Theory" doesn't make the comedy series cut, ABC's "black-ish" could again be the sole network entry in a field of buzzy cable and streaming nominees. Among dramas, "This Is Us" could be the lone broadcast entry, as it was last year.

Some major past winners aren't in contention this year because of eligibility window requirements, among them "Atlanta," "Big Little Lies," "The Crown," "Westworld" and "The Handmaid's Tale" (although it was able to submit in a handful of down-ticket categories). ☐

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	SUN 1:50	4:10	6:20

PBP	MON-THU & SUN 2:55	5:05	7:15	9:25
	FRI-SAT 2:55	5:05	7:15	9:25

KAYA SCODELARIO | BARRY PEPPER

CRAWL

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH	MON-THU 3:50	5:50	7:50
VIP	FRI 3:50	5:50	7:50
	SAT 1:50	3:50	5:50
	SUN 1:50	3:50	5:50

PBP	MON-THU & SUN 1:40	3:40	5:40	7:40	9:40
VIP	FRI-SAT 1:40	3:40	5:40	7:40	9:40

PBP	MON-THU & SUN 2:30	4:30	6:30	8:30
	FRI-SAT 2:30	4:30	6:30	8:30

TOM HOLLAND | SAMUEL L. JACKSON

SPIDER-MAN

Far From Home

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH	MON-FRI 5:50	8:40
VIP	SAT-SUN 3:00	5:50

PH	MON-THU 4:50	7:40
VIP	FRI 4:50	7:40
	SAT 2:00	4:50
	SUN 2:00	4:50

PBP	MON-THU & SUN 2:00	4:45	7:30
PBP	FRI-SAT 2:00	4:45	7:30

VIP	MON-SUN 12:55	3:40	6:25	9:10
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ALSO SHOWING!

VERA FARMIGA | PATRICK WILSON

ANNABELLE

COMES HOME

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

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	SUN 2:05	4:30	6:55

PBP	MON-THU & SUN 7:50		
	FRI-SAT 7:50	10:00	

CHRIS HEMSWORTH | TESSA THOMPSON

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WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PBP	MON-SUN 1:30	4:00	6:30	9:00
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TOM HANKS | TIM ALLEN

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TOY STORY 4

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

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	SAT 1:40	4:00	6:25
	SUN 1:40	4:00	6:25

PBP	MON-SUN 12:55	5:25
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VIP	MON-THU & SUN 3:10	7:45
	FRI-SAT 3:10	7:45

VERA FARMIGA | PATRICK WILSON

ANNABELLE

COMES HOME

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PH	MON-THU 4:30	6:55	9:20
	FRI 4:30	6:55	9:20
	SAT 2:05	4:30	6:55
	SUN 2:05	4:30	6:55

PBP	MON-THU & SUN 7:50		
	FRI-SAT 7:50	10:00	

CHRIS HEMSWORTH | TESSA THOMPSON

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INTERNATIONAL

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PBP	MON-SUN 1:30	4:00	6:30	9:00
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HIMESH PATEL | LILY JAMES

YESTERDAY

WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES

PBP	MON-SUN 2:40	5:15
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Purl jam: Finland hosts heavy metal knitting championship

By DAVID KEYTON

Associated Press

JOENSUU, Finland (AP) —

Armed with needles and a yarn of wool, teams of avid knitters danced Thursday to the deafening sounds of drums beating and guitars slashing at the first-ever Heavy Metal Knitting World Championship in eastern Finland.

With stage names such as Woolfumes, Bunny Bandit and 9" Needles, the participants shared a simple goal: to showcase their knitting skills while dancing to heavy metal music in the most outlandish way possible.

"It's ridiculous but it's so much fun," said Heather McLaren, an engineering PhD student who traveled from Scotland for a shot at the "world title."

"When I saw there was a combination of heavy metal and knitting, I thought 'that's my niche.'"

The competition took place in a packed square in the small town of Joensuu close to the Russian border.

An eclectic group of around 200 people watched the performances, from families with young children and elderly to the less conspicuous heavy metal fans donning leath-



The competitors of the first Heavy Metal Knitting world championship react on stage, Thursday, July 11, 2019 in Joensuu, Finland.

er-jackets and swirling their long hair to the fast-paced rhythm of the music.

A niche musical genre in many countries, heavy metal is more mainstream in Finland, with several bands household names frequently played on the radio.

Its popularity grew further in 2006 when the Finnish band Lordi won the Eurovision Song Contest dressed as monsters.

Today, Finland has the

highest number of heavy metal bands per capita in the world with over 50 bands per 100,000 people. Even former U.S. President Barack Obama commented on this rich tradition while welcoming his Finnish counterpart to the White House in 2016.

"In Finland it's very dark in the wintertime, so maybe it's in our roots.

We're a bit melancholic, like the rhythm," said Mark Pyykkonen, one of three

people judging the competition.

While combining heavy metal music with knitting might not seem an obvious match, the organizers say it's similar to other unusual events in Finland, such as world championships in air guitar, swamp soccer, and wife carrying — Finnish ways of goofing around and making the most of the long summer nights in these northern latitudes.

"We have such dark and

long winters," said Mari Karjalainen, one of the founders of the event. "This really gives us lots of time to plan for our short summers and come up with silly ideas."

Thursday's competition saw participants from nine countries, including the United States, Japan, and Russia, put on inspired performances full of theatrics, passion and drama and the jury struggled to agree upon a winner.

Finally, it was a Japanese performance by the five-person Giga Body Metal team that clinched the title with a show featuring crazy sumo wrestlers and a man dressed in a traditional Japanese kimono.

"It's a great release," said Elise Schut, a 35-year-old nurse from Michigan who performed with her 71-year-old mother and 64-year-old family friend, Beth Everson, who added that "knitting is such a meditative activity but now it's energetic and heart pumping."

After the success and fun of this first championship, the organizers announced they would repeat it next summer, adding Heavy Metal Knitting to the already long list of weird and yet hilarious Finland summer gatherings. □

Ed Sheeran wins again with new terrain, new friends



This cover image released by Atlantic Records shows "No. 6 Collaborations Project," by Ed Sheeran.

Associated Press

By MARK KENNEDY

Associated Press

Ed Sheeran, "No. 6 Collaborations Project" (Atlantic) If anything, Ed Sheeran's new album does two things.

It lets him show off his tremendous range. And it lets him show off his impressive rolodex.

A stunning who's who of music's top stars — including Cardi B, Justin Bieber, Travis Scott, Khalid, Eminem and Bruno Mars — appear on "No. 6 Collaborations Project." The result is an understandably scattershot of styles — G-Funk, grime, trap, R&B, tropical hip-hop, ballads, hair metal — but what knits it together is an impossibly high level of songwriting and an undeniable joy.

Sheeran seems to revel in playing with Migos effects (Skrrt!), rap with Eminem, sing in front of a horn section and be on a track with Cardi B purring "Okurrr." The title of the 15-track project is a nod to his 2011 "No. 5 Collaborations Project," which saw Sheeran team up with U.K. rappers. This time, he welcomes every-

one from H.E.R. to Paulo Londra, an artist from Argentina.

If listeners go on to explore some of the lesser-known collaborators — like the brilliant rapper Dave — then everyone wins.

Standouts include "Cross Me" with Chance the Rapper and PnB Rock, "Take Me Back to London" with Stormzy and "Beautiful People" with Khalid.

Despite all the collaborations, there are little touches that remind you it's a Sheeran album.

He's still got that sad-sack, lovable misfit thing going on, despite earning acclaim and millions of bucks. Two songs — "Beautiful People" and "I Don't Care" with Bieber — have Sheeran at a party where he feels he doesn't belong. "I always

feel like I'm nobody," he sings.

One thing that has changed is that marriage seems to agree with Sheeran.

If in the past, he was creeping a little in an ex's DMs, the newly wed Sheeran has created an album awash with love messages to his wife. "I'm stickin' with my baby, for sure," he sings on "Cross Me." On "Put It All on Me," he admits: "Having my woman there is good for my soul." Missing home is a continual theme.

He does get frisky for someone not Mrs. Ed Sheeran on another fun track "South of the Border," a kind of U.S. cousin to his "Galway Girl." He and Camila Cabello celebrate a lass with "brown eyes, caramel thighs" who makes him cry

out (OK, a little cringingly) "te amo, mami."

Finally, Cardi B storms in to play up the double entendre of the title and announce: "I think that Ed got a lil' jungle fever."

A few of the guests elevate some songs — Stormzy and YEBBA, among them — but there are a few underwhelming tracks, including the Sheeran-Ella Mai union on "Put It All on Me" and the Bieber song.

For the last track, Sheeran, Mars and Chris Stapleton — just take a moment to wrap your head around that stunning trio — get into a Led Zeppelin groove with "BLOW," a head-banger awash in sexual imagery. "Pull my trigger/Let me blow your mind."

Too late. Our mind was blown a few tracks ago. □



I just *couldn't*
help myself.



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